

How to Make it Work:

A Case Study of Inclusion in a Community Figure Skating Club

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of my research was to a) examine the organizational and instructional features of the King City Skating Club (KCSC) that contribute to its ability to integrate persons with an accommodation into their figure skating programs and b) develop guidelines for other sport organizations that allow for full and meaningful integration of youth who require accommodations into their programming. I chose to undertake a case study of the KCSC. Data were collected via interviews and a focus group, and introspective field notes were taken within two hours of leaving the club or interview location to provide me with an ongoing internal audit trail. Data analysis involved the identification of salience and patterns as well as overarching thematics informed by Max van Manen's phenomenological existential categories of body, space, time, and relation. Results indicated five considerations when examining meaningful inclusion in community sport: open and effective communication, education, sense of community, space and time, and having a focus on the participants' needs. Recommendations for future research included a multiple case study design as well as a focus on specific health benefits.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### **Background**

The literature regarding persons with an accommodation (PWA) and their accessibility to sport tends to focus on integration within physical education programs in schools (Brittain, 2004; Clark & MacArthur, 2008; Haycock & Smith, 2011; Law, Petrenchik, King, & Hurley, 2007). The integration and accessibility of PWA into community sport have been explored; however, the research typically identifies a particular disability, for example Cerebral Palsy or Down Syndrome, and then explores accessibility, programming and inclusion issues (Oates, Bebbington, Bourke, Girdler, & Leonard, 2011). PWA refers to any skater who has been identified by the parents/guardians to the BOD as having an impairment requiring a special accommodation made by the club. The impairment may be cognitive, developmental and/or physical (Cameron, 2014).

Sport is important in childhood development because, “participation in play, recreation, and sport has a profound impact on overall growth and development and are essential elements for satisfying childhood and adolescence” (Rimmer & Rowland, 2008, p.141). Bedell et al. (2013) notes that activity that stimulates a sense of accomplishment, such as sport, in childhood cultivates more positive development into adulthood. PWA are at a high risk of obesity and tend to have lower self-esteem and social acceptance from their peers, however, participation in sport allows for an increase in the psychological well-being of the child and overall health improvements (Murphy & Carbone, 2008). According to Rimmer and Rowland (2008), childhood is when the development of self-concept, attitudes, and behaviours are learned that will later transfer into adulthood and sport is a catalyst for many of the above mentioned aspects.



Sport participation is a difficult task for PWA for reasons that include policy barriers, lack of opportunities, social isolation, and public knowledge about integration and accommodations (Mills & Hoeber, 2013; Murphy & Carbone, 2008; Overmars-Marx, Thomése, Verdonschot, & Meininger, 2014, Rimmer & Rowland, 2008) More information regarding each of these barriers will be discussed in Chapter Two. Social isolation can be linked to the idea that programs are developed by adults without input from the participants themselves resulting in limited effective social interactions (Mills & Hoeber, 2013). Further, by not being active these individuals face social issues including decreased self-esteem and social acceptance (Murphy & Carbone, 2008). These individuals face issues with both community sport and sport within the school system, “... over two-thirds of school age children with a physical disability had a problem joining in and participating fully at school... 60% of those aged 5-14 were prevented from taking part in sports and games at school...” (Clark & MacArthur, 2008, p. 457). The underlying reason given by Clark and MacArthur (2008) for this barrier to participation was the individuals’ physical disability and/or impairment. Furthermore, not being able to participate in sports and games, or school outings also affected the individuals’ ability to cultivate friendships.

### **Skate Ontario**

Skate Ontario is the provincial sport organization (PSO) for the sport of figure skating in Ontario. Incorporated in 1982, it is divided into 4 member sections: Central Ontario, Eastern Ontario, Western Ontario, and Northern Ontario (“Who We Are”, 2015). Within these 4 member sections, Skate Ontario serves approximately 75,000 members and offers programs that range from competitive, to recreational figure skating, including Special Olympics. This level of membership demonstrates the high interest and participation by Ontarians with regards to figure skating. Additionally, as a part of Skate

Ontario's targets the organization wanted to, "...redefine programming for Canadians with physical and mental disabilities who want to skate" (Skate Canada, 2014, p. 16). It is evident that figure skating in Canada, particularly in Ontario, is popular and the opportunities for PWA are/should be available. The Skate Canada-Central Ontario website specifically states:

In 1998, Skate Canada-Central Ontario established a Special Needs Committee to develop a strategy for including individuals with specific disabilities into the skating clubs. The ultimate goal is to provide an opportunity for all disabled athletes to participate in skating programs throughout the province and eventually Canada-wide. (Skate Canada-Central Ontario, n.d, para. 7)

This statement clearly delineates Skate Canada-Central Ontario's role regarding inclusiveness and accessibility for all individuals regardless of abilities.

### **KCSC**

The KCSC has been a non-profit community sport organization since 1972 (King City Skating Club, 2016). The club currently operates out of two different locations with their main goal to "continue to offer you professional skating services as provisioned by Skate Canada in a positive learning environment" (King City Skating Club, 2016, para.2). KCSC does not own the locations, they are city owned and the club simply rents the ice/space. The club is run by a board of volunteers and is associated with Skate Canada and Skate Ontario. KCSC currently offers different programs such as StarSkate, CanSkate and Learn to Skate, and Intro to Figure Skating ("Programs offered", 2016) to those aged three years and older. KCSC also has the opportunity for individuals with "exceptionalities" (King City Skating Club, 2016, para.1) to qualify/participate in the Special Olympics.

Through discussions with the President of the KCSC, I learned that the club has a volunteer Board of Directors (BOD) which has the possibility of changing every two years depending upon individuals' desires to remain members of the BOD or if new people want to potentially join the BOD. The BOD is made up of seven volunteers, with one being the Coaches' Representative, parents, and/or members of the community. These individuals have the opportunity to join the BOD. KCSC is currently made up of approximately 155 skaters, with about seven of those skaters requiring a special accommodation. The President also mentioned that the members of the club typically come from high middle to middle class families, with an annual household income of approximately \$80,000- \$200,000 (much like the geographical area where the club is located). Furthermore, the CanSkate and Intro to Figure Skating programs that the club offers have a large immigrant population as participants. The KCSC also currently employs 11 coaches. These coaches are a combination of full and part time employees. To be a member of the KCSC costs anywhere from \$275.00 -\$1,490.00 depending on the number of days the child skates as well as the number of months. There is also the Skate Canada membership fee, which is non-refundable of \$40.00 ("Fees", 2016). KCSC does not charge additional fees for one-on-one accommodation for special need skaters.

### **Rationale**

Not only are there health benefits associated with participating in community sport and activity for children with and without a disability (Murphy & Carbone, 2008; Rimmer & Rowland, 2008; Ryan, Katsiyannis, Cadorette, Hodge, & Markham, 2014) there are also a multitude of social benefits these children can attain (Clark & MacArthur, 2008; Mills & Hoeber, 2013; Murphy & Carbone, 2008). These concerns and benefits will be discussed in greater detail in chapter two. Some reasons for the lack of participation in sport among people with a special accommodation revealed in the

literature include: functional limitations, high costs of sport programs, lack of nearby facilities/ programs, attitudinal barriers (family, individual, and community), and lack of support for social inclusion (Clark & MacArthur, 2008; Overmars-Marx et al., 2014; Rimmer & Rowland, 2008; Shields & Synnot, 2014). In order to combat these issues, research is needed to uncover how an organization can best use and acquire resources to allow PWAs to participate in community sport. Unfortunately, adaptive physical activity literature in this area does not examine the organization or its culture when addressing the present issues. According to Mills and Hoeber (2013), studying the organization and/or its culture, particularly in community sport settings, will help to reveal the relevant aspects of organizational life. Furthermore, they noted that there is a solid tie between a strong organizational culture (e.g., tight-knit, awareness of all aspects of the organization, open and frequent communication) and success and therefore organizational culture should be explored at the community sport level. Organizational culture will be discussed in further detail in chapter two. By exploring community sport and integrating PWA into the programming, societal barriers ought to be reduced and the social abilities of these PWA should be improved (Murphy & Carbone, 2008). For these reasons I developed the following research questions in order to help determine effective integrative processes.

### **Research Questions**

The purpose of my research was to a) uncover the organizational and instructional features of the King City Skating Club (KCSC) that contribute to its ability to integrate persons with an accommodation into their figure skating programs and b) develop guidelines for other sport organizations that allow for full and meaningful integration of children requiring accommodations into their programming as well. By studying the organization as a whole via a case study, I hoped to generate a robust description and guidelines that can stand as an exemplar for other similarly motivated sport organizations

to use to work toward successful and effective integration. This case study explored the following questions;

1. How is KCSC able to accommodate multiple children with varying disabilities?
2. a) What are the experiences of the PWA and their parents in KCSC?  
b) What aspects of the experience make it meaningful for the PWA?

### **Overview of Project**

As a previous member of the KCSC, I have first-hand knowledge that the club has been inclusive for at least 12 years and therefore would be an ideal exemplar club to study to address my research questions. This case study utilized various data sources recommended for case study research (Yin, 2003) including interviews with the PWA, their parents, and coaches, and a focus group interview with the members of the Board of Directors (BOD) for KCSC. By studying the organization via interviews with people at different levels of the organization I was able to gain multiple perspectives that provided substantial descriptions of organizational (i.e., the KCSC), administrative (i.e., the members of the board of directors of KCSC and its staff), and interpersonal processes (i.e., relationships with staff and participants).

### **Terms**

Person(s) with an Accommodation (PWA) is defined as any skater who has been identified by the parents/guardians to the BOD as having an impairment requiring a special accommodation made by the club. The impairment may be cognitive, developmental, and/or physical (Cameron, 2014).

Inclusion refers to the involvement and integration of individuals with and without an impairment (cognitive, developmental, and/or physical) in the same activity (i.e., same group in figure skating) (Cameron, 2014).

Typically Developed/ing Peers (TDP) is defined as individuals who are not receiving special education/services (“about education”, 2016)

## Chapter 2: Review of Literature

### Barriers to Sport Participation

The literature related to PWA and their accessibility to sport tends to focus on integration in physical education programs in schools (Brittain, 2004; Clark & MacArthur, 2008; Haycock & Smith, 2011; Law et al., 2007). As mentioned earlier, the integration and accessibility of PWA in community level sport has been explored with a focus on specific disabilities, for example, Cerebral Palsy or Down Syndrome (Oates et al., 2011) however, integration and sport as well as ways to integrate individuals with different needs have not been explored as a whole.

Community sport participation and integration of PWA have not yet been explored with a focus on the systematic (i.e., organizational processes) factors of an organization. One study was undertaken on the organization as an aspect of the research, but the primary informant group was either the children or parents (Mills & Hoeber, 2013). Mills and Hoeber (2013) identified that there is evidence of social exclusion and discrimination in local sport clubs/leagues. This is evident through gender, culture, race, and ability (Frost, Lightbody, & Halabi, 2013; Taylor, 2004). The idea of segregation (e.g., separate groups or teams) and discrimination of children with an accommodation in sport has been identified by these authors, but there has yet to be research that is focused on ways to correct these issues within the sport clubs. My research identified the problems and offered solutions that organizations can potentially use to be more successful in the integration process.

The barriers to sport participation by PWA that have been identified in multiple studies include: functional limitations (which include lack of preparedness to accommodate and architectural barriers), high costs, lack of facilities/ programming, and government policies (e.g., direct or indirect financial support such as tax credits) (Law et

al., 2007, Murphy & Carbone, 2008; Overmars-Marx et al., 2014). Overmars-Marx et al. (2014) noted that there has been very little empirical evidence that focuses on the relationship between local (i.e., individual club particularity) and organizational policies (e.g., at state or provincial levels) and social inclusion relating to PWA. It has also been suggested by Mills and Hoeber (2013) that in order to combat this issue of discrimination manifested by exclusion from programs or infantilization of individuals and other inappropriate attitudes, members of the organization need to have shared values that are reflected in practice, which does not usually happen. Additionally, there have been links identified between having a strong organizational culture, that is, reflected in coherence amongst stakeholders regarding ideological outlooks, and the overall performance of the organization and satisfaction of both its participants and staff (Mills & Hoeber, 2013).

Further barriers to participation have been identified by Shields and Synnot (2014) in their study when they examined what the personnel in sport organizations perceive to be the barriers and facilitators for participation by PWA. Their study identified “program” as the highest ranked barrier to participation. This barrier consists of staff perceptions and attitudes, knowledge and training of staff, program features, and economic (costs) of inclusion and integration (Shields & Synnot, 2014). This study revealed that personnel working within these sport organizations perceive themselves to be one of the biggest barriers affecting participation by PWA. Lack of training, knowledge, money, and the understanding of the different limitations and necessary accommodations make it difficult for the personnel within the organization to engage in full and effective participation which supports inclusion.

A study of non-sport organizations conducted by Law et al. (2007) investigated the issue of participation barriers from the parents’ point of view. Their study indicated



that parents perceive barriers to be mainly associated with the physical and structural environment of work and school, followed closely by lack of policies regarding accessibility (Law et al., 2007). Although the main barriers identified by parents were work and school, the "... barriers relate to the relative supportiveness of the social and attitudinal environments in these settings" (Law et al., 2007, p. 1640). This coincides with barriers identified by personnel in Shields and Synnot's (2014) study. Attitude appears to be an important indicator of inclusion in sport for PWA, as identified by parents and staff. A separate study focusing on physical environment conducted in New Zealand revealed that 60% of school-aged PWA were prevented from taking part in sports or games at school due to the environment or their physical abilities and lack of adaptations available (Clark & MacArthur, 2008).

Research by Moran and Block (2010) examined four different barriers for PWA, and also offered potential solutions to overcome these issues. The first barrier identified was fear of liability should something happen by integrating a PWA in a group with typically developing peers (TDP). This stems from the fear that should an injury occur, a parent may legally pursue the organization. The solution that Moran and Block (2010) developed to combat this barrier was education. Educating the staff and volunteers aided in their comfort level of integrating a PWA into a sport program. Additionally, the authors suggested trying adaptive equipment in a practice with administration and coaches supervising to ensure that the option is safe. The second barrier focused on the coaches and their lack of knowledge and training (similar to the issues identified by the personnel in Shields and Synnot (2014)). Moran and Block suggested that there should be clinics to educate coaches so that they feel more qualified and able to handle any special accommodations necessary for the participation of PWA. The third barrier identified is

fear on the part of the child and parents (Moran & Block, 2010). The main solution to this barrier was to have an open discussion with the other players on the team explaining what the disability is so that they feel more comfortable and are more likely to accept the PWA onto the team thereby combating the fears of both the parents and the child of not being fully accepted. The final barrier identified in this study was one that has been previously mentioned as well, “lack of appropriate programs” (p. 9). The solution offered by these authors was to combine community resources with a nearby community to ensure ample opportunity for PWA.

In addition to the barriers already noted above Tonkin, Ogilvie, Greenwood, Law, and Anaby (2014) conducted a study to better understand the individuals’ experience with participation. They listed additional barriers that have yet to be mentioned, these include: “bullying, stigma, nonuse of sign language, time pressures, and unnecessary assistance from adults” (p. 232). Policies were also a barrier identified within their study. Furthermore, they stated that, “participation is a complex phenomenon that is influenced by a multitude of factors, including those associated with the child, the family, and the environment” (Tonkin et al., 2014, p. 232). This is important to keep in mind when conducting research regarding PWA and sport participation; there are multiple views and factors that need to be taken into consideration for full and proper integration into the sport environment.

### **Health Concerns/Benefits**

Despite the barriers that PWA face with regards to sport participation, there is a multitude of benefits for participation and health concerns regarding inactivity. A previous study revealed that 55% of children with a disability have never participated in a physical activity (Bedell et al., 2013). The inactivity rates among children with a disability contribute to health concerns (Murphy & Carbone, 2008; Rimmer & Rowland,

2008; Ryan et al., 2014). In particular, it has been identified that PWA have lower levels of cardiorespiratory fitness, lower levels of muscular endurance, and an increased risk of obesity to name just a few health concerns (Murphy & Carbone, 2008). Physical activity has been proven to enhance quality of life for children with a disability or chronic disease (Riner & Sellhorst, 2013). By being physically active a child is more likely to have increased self-esteem, lower levels of anxiety/stress, overall mood improvement, and a lower chance of mental health concerns or depression (Klein & Hollingshead, 2015; Riner & Sellhorst, 2013). Ensuring that all children have access to opportunity for regular physical activity and sport is critical for improving or maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

Unfortunately, obesity has become a high health risk among youth (Ryan et al., 2014) with inactivity being a main contributor. PWA are at a higher risk of becoming obese than their typically-developing peers (TDP) (Murphy & Carbone, 2008). According to Rimmer and Rowland (2008), youth with an accommodation have a 4.5 times increased rate of inactivity compared to their TDP. According to Klein and Hollingshead (2015), the obesity rates in PWA are 38% higher than their peers without a disability. Obesity transfers into adulthood where the likelihood of adults with a disability being obese is 58% higher than other adults (Rimmer & Rowland, 2008). In addition to obesity and other health concerns, PWA also face social barriers to sport participation. This may include, but is not limited to, ostracism by peers, poor friendship development, social segregation, marginalization, and poor psychological development (Law et al., 2007; Murphy & Carbone, 2008; Riner & Sellhorst, 2013).

Interestingly it has been demonstrated that participants in the Special Olympics demonstrated heightened self-esteem, perceived physical competence, and peer

acceptance compared to non-participants (Murphy & Carbone, 2008). A comparative study conducted by Marks, Sisirak, Heller, and Wagner (2010) revealed that,

Before the health promotion program, 49% of the athletes stated that they had ‘plenty of friends’ and 51% of the athletes reported that they ‘have some friends but I wish I had more.’ Following the program, 72% of the athletes stated that they ‘had plenty of friends’ (p. 123).

This study demonstrated the positive effect sport can have on individuals, specifically those who require an accommodation.

Furthermore, children who are physically active have “... lower blood pressure levels, more favourable lipoprotein levels, higher bone density, and decreased adiposity compared to their sedentary counterparts” (Riner & Sellhorst, 2013, pp. 12-13). This is especially important for PWA as they tend to have pre-existing medical conditions/issues and are more susceptible to injury. Furthermore, “... regular physical activity for children with disabilities has been shown to help in controlling or slowing the progression of the chronic disease, improving overall health and function, and mediating the psychological impact of the condition on children and families” (Murphy & Carbone, 2008, p. 1057). A study conducted with children who have Cerebral Palsy and/or a developmental disability demonstrated an improved function with regards to gait speed, gross motor abilities, and wheelchair propulsion (Rimmer & Rowland, 2008).

Not only are there health, mental health, and quality of life benefits associated with participating in community sport and activity, there is also a multitude of social benefits these children can attain, “Participation in play, recreation, and sport has a profound impact on overall growth and development and are essential elements for satisfying childhood and adolescence” (Rimmer & Rowland, 2008, p. 141). Two other

important benefits for PWA participating in sport are moral development, such as fair play and sportspersonship, and learning how to manage one's time, which includes setting goals and staying in control (Moran & Block, 2010). Due to the constant interaction with peers and adults in organized sport, developmental opportunities are increased for youth (Wagnsson, Augustsson, & Patriksson, 2013). They also noted that "... youth participating in sports report significantly better characteristics on most developmental outcomes when compared to non-participants" (p. 38). Additionally, being physically active has also been shown to improve academic performance with a significant association between involvement in sport and self-esteem, physical competence, reported grades, and lower alcohol use (Wagnsson et al., 2013).

### **Adapted Physical Activity**

Making modifications in any activity setting either recreational or competitive to allow PWA to participate with their TDP is important and has been shown to be useful when implemented properly (Block & Zeman, 1996; Klein & Hollingshead, 2015; Ryan et al., 2014). Ryan et al. (2014) suggested that "adaptive sports programs are designed particularly to allow individuals with moderate to severe disabilities the opportunity to participate in and enjoy team sports while considering their unique needs" (p. 40). According to Klein and Hollingshead (2015), the readiness of instructional staff to implement appropriate and effective accommodations for PWA is a rare occurrence due to lack of support and information. The readiness of individuals, in general, to integrate PWA with their TDP in physical activity is lacking as mentioned above in the Shields and Synnot (2014) study. Block and Zeman (1996) offer some insightful and useful ways to provide inclusion, which involve, "... providing trained support staff in the form of peer volunteers, paraprofessionals, and specialists" (p. 46) however, "unfortunately, such support is rarely given to regular physical educators" (p. 46). For this reason, Klein and

Hollingshead (2015) noted the importance of collaboration among special educators, physical educators, coaches and other instructional professionals, parents, and even children in order to have the most successful experience possible.

With regards to community sport and adaptive physical activity (APA) research is very sparse. Ryan et al. (2014) discussed the importance of adaptive programs within a community noting that “team sporting activities are designed to improve self-esteem, confidence and social integration, while advocating full participation of persons with disabilities in all aspects of life” (p. 33). They continued to list and explain the various roles that are necessary for effective integration. These roles include organizers, such as the league, coaches, and buddies, volunteers who are paired one-on-one with PWA, and parent volunteers (Ryan et al., 2014). Collaborative strategies presented by Klein and Hollingshead (2014) are further exemplified in the way that Ryan and colleagues explained how to successfully implement an APA program in the community including necessities such as parent volunteers, organization of teams based upon skill level, one-on-one volunteers, and coaches/ organizers with background knowledge in adaptive sports or physical activity in general. However, it is important to note that these recommendations are not for integration practices with TDP, but rather an adaptive program just for individuals who require an accommodation.

When investigating APA programming, it is important to consider the TDP who are involved in the same physical education class or sport team to ensure there is no hindrance to their progress (Block & Zeman, 1996). Block and Zeman (1996) conducted a controlled experimental study to determine TDPs’ skill and attitudinal perceptions of being in a physical education class with PWA. The study revealed that although the group who did not have any PWA had a larger skill acquisition score, the group with PWA had

more positive attitudes towards adaptations and inclusion demonstrating the value-added outcomes when inclusion is a conscious decision (Block & Zeman, 1996). Positive attitude is important to consider when creating APA programming because it allows the organizer to consider all of the different children's attitudes, which can enhance or hinder a program's success.

Instructor attitudes are also important to consider when determining if a program will be successful. According to Rizzo (1984), one of the most critical factors influencing whether individuals are ready to take on the challenge of working with and teaching individuals with disabilities is their attitude. Studies have demonstrated that physical education teachers in particular do not feel as though they are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to teach PWA (Leo & Goodwin, 2014; Rizzo, 1984; Rizzo & Kirkendall, 1995). The perceived confidence of a program facilitator is a major influencing factor, as identified by Rizzo and Kirkendall (1995) where "advanced undergraduate students with more favorable experiences and academic preparation with people with disabilities had greater perceived competence than younger future physical education teachers" (p. 212). This is an important point to consider when preparing individuals to work with PWA or in the APA area. As mentioned above, education and confidence have been identified as being important to inclusive program success not only by physical educators but also by community sport organization personnel (as mentioned above). Unfortunately, it appears that the readiness and preparedness of people working in APA or with PWA are not at the level they need to be. Ongoing research in APA continues to address these concerns as well as different educational tools for individuals to utilize.

Leo and Goodwin (2014) discussed the pros and cons of using disability

simulations (i.e., use of a wheelchair) as a teaching mechanism for students as they allow them to negotiate their environments in a way that may be similar to that of an individual with a disability. This learning tool, however, has received a lot of criticism as it has the potential to offend the disability community, trivialize the disability experience, and leave students with the impression that people with a disability should be pitied or devalued (Leo & Goodwin, 2014). Adaptive sport programs in the community are essential as they are “designed particularly to allow individuals with moderate to severe disabilities the opportunity to participate in and enjoy team sports while considering their unique needs” (Ryan et al., 2014, p. 40).

### **Organizational Culture**

Organizational culture can be defined as “the set of values, guiding beliefs, understandings, and ways of thinking that is shared by members of an organization and is taught to new member as correct” (Daft, 1998, p. 368). Additionally, it is something that surrounds everyone in the organization on a regular basis, and is created through the intra-organizational interactions with other individuals (Schein, 1992). Organizational culture becomes embedded within the minds of employees and in turn reflects the unwritten expectations and behaviours of employees (Daft, 1998). This constitutes the identity of the organization and typically begins with the founder or early leader of the organization.

According to Daft (1998) there are two levels of organizational culture; visible artifacts and observable behaviours. Daft notes that, “the attributes of culture display themselves in many ways but typically evolve into a patterned set of activities carried out through social interactions” (Daft, 1998, p. 368). The leader of the organization is responsible to identify and portray the expected behaviours of the rest of the employees. For this reason, Schein (1992) believes that leadership and organizational culture cannot



exist separately and that leadership has a profound impact on the culture of an organization. He goes on to note that culture is therefore associated with the values of the leader to be enacted within the organization.

Culture serves two main purposes within an organization. The first purpose is to help with the integration of new members revealing the expectations of interactions within the organization. This is followed by the second purpose, that is, to help the organization adapt to the external environment (Daft, 1998). Culture can be difficult to decipher just by simply observing an organization. In order to truly understand and learn about the culture of an organization, Daft (1998) believes one needs to become/ be an insider of the organization. Daft (1998) also discussed that the some of the most typical and visible aspects of a culture are “rites and ceremonies, stories, symbols, and language” (p.369). These would all be considered visible artifacts and would fall under the first level of organizational culture.

Many times words such as “strong” or “quality” maybe be used to describe an organization’s culture. According to Daft (1998) culture strength is the level of agreement amongst employees of an organization with regards to the importance of certain values. He goes on to note that a strong culture is classically associated with ceremonies, symbols, stories, heroes, and slogans and the frequency to which any of these aspects are used within the organization. In order to have a powerful or strong organizational culture there must be shared assumptions (i.e., values, behaviours) amongst employees. When these assumptions are shared and mutually agreed upon they are more likely to be reinforced by all members (Schein, 1992). The development, implementation, and reinforcement of these assumptions and behaviours are, once again, funneled through the organization beginning with the leader. One way that Daft (1998) suggests to maintain

the organizational culture is through the selection and socialization of new employees.

Ensuring that any new employee becomes aware of the expectations of the early on will allow for a greater chance of cohesiveness.

Organizational culture is likely to reflect both the internal and external aspects of the organization (Schein, 1992). However, the culture of an organization may need to be adaptive, particularly in response the external environment (i.e., economic climate). Having an adaptive culture usually means that managers pay greater attention to their constituencies (i.e., customers) and are ready and willing to makes changes to serve their interests (Daft, 1998). Additionally, adaptive cultures have managers who typically value their customers, stakeholders, and employees and also value the people and/or processes that can help to create useful change (Daft, 1998). Whether an organization is adaptive or not depends on the leader/manager but also the type of organization.

### **Training and Development**

Training and development of employees in any organization are essential to the overall success as it keeps everyone up to date on expectations and important information. Training can be defined as, “the formal and planned efforts to help employees acquire knowledge, skills, and abilities to improve performance in their current job” (Saks & Haccoun, 2016, p. 8). The overall role of training is to allow employees to learn how to do their job better. Development can be defined as, “the formal and planned efforts to help employees acquire the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to perform future job responsibilities and for the long-term achievement of individual career goals and organizational objectives” (Saks & Haccoun, 2016, p.8). The important aspect of development is to allow employees the opportunity to grow as individuals within an organization and build their career, often to lead to managerial positions. By an organization investing in training and development of their employees

the organization benefits by gaining a sustained competitive advantage due to improved employee performance (Mpofu & Hlatywayo, 2015; Saks & Haccoun, 2016). This in turn has benefits for both the organization as well as the employees. Employee benefits can be both intrinsic (e.g., knowledge) or external (e.g., salary) and excellent motivational tools to an individual (Saks & Haccoun, 2016).

A study conducted by Mpofu and Hlatywayo (2015) on the relationship between quality employee training and development and service delivery found that there is in fact a relationship between quality training and development and employee performance. When the employees are performing at a higher level, the service quality reflects this change in performance. This study also determined that in order to maintain improvements within an organization, employee performance needs to be managed and evaluated on a regular basis (Mpofu & Hlatwayo, 2015). Mpofu and Hlatawyo (2015) resonate with Saks and Haccoun (2016) who suggest that performance management, which is an on-going process, helps illuminate what aspects are important to the organization, and also the accountability of employees and overall performance improvements. If an organization does not provide training and development to its employees, the retention rates of those employees will not be high hence putting both the organization and the individual at a disadvantage.

Saks and Haccoun (2016) also note that in Canada, many organizations do not provide training and development opportunities for employees, particularly if these employees are part-time/temporary, older, less-educated, or are part of a small- or medium- sized organization. These authors continue on to state that a major reason for this lack of training, in Canada in particular, is that it is not seen as having high importance.

It is important for employees of an organization to have access to a shared knowledge base. Saks and Haccoun (2016) discuss this aspect as organizational learning, which is to say “the process of creating, sharing, diffusing, and applying knowledge in organizations” (p. 44). Organizational learning is not only based in the learning of individual employees, but also and probably more importantly based in how the organization as a whole is able to distribute new knowledge throughout its various constituencies. This is not to say that individual employee learning is not important; the two go hand-in-hand in the overall development of the organization because without individual learning and growth, the organization as a whole cannot learn and grow. It is important for organizations to evaluate what training and development are important within the organization. Once the organization has made this determination then they will be able to decide the best type and delivery method for training and development.

This review of the literature has disclosed several key issues. These are the barriers to sport participation for PWA, health concerns that stem from the lack of participation as well as the health benefits of participation, and the readiness of instructors to implement adapted physical activity. This review also revealed the lack of research pertaining to the effective implementation of APA in local community sport organizations, focusing on integration rather than separation. In summary, the reviewed literature suggested to me that the need for more effective integration is necessary so that PWA can receive the best sport experience possible, and that organizations themselves need to engage in practices that contribute organizational effectiveness and growth.

### **Chapter 3: Research Design**

#### **Case Study and Research Site**

For the purpose of this study I conducted a case study of a figure skating club that integrates PWA-King City Skating Club (KCSC). A case study was the best option for this study because it “allows investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events” (Yin, 2003, p. 2). I planned to uncover the processes that contribute to how the KCSC was able to integrate PWA by garnering meaning from individuals and their descriptions of their experiences within the organization. As a previous participant with this club, I had first-hand knowledge with the integration of PWA for the past 12 years. This site was selected because of its years of experience with inclusion facilitation and its established reputation within Skate Ontario’s club profile description.

According to Yin (2013), a case study should, “examine the likely interaction between the case and its context” (p. 321). I examined the case (KCSC) via my interactions with parents, children, coaches, and board members (context) to uncover how the different groups describe the processes contributing to the inclusion of PWA by the organization. Often times in case study research the perspectives and experiences of people from many levels within the organization are not taken into consideration (Overmars-Marx et al., 2014). For this reason, I interviewed multiple groups (parents, children, coaches, board members) involved in the organization to gain more insight. According to Yin’s (2003) criteria, this case study strove to be explanatory as it addressed both “how” and “why” questions as well as the organization’s operational practices, traced over time that contributed to its inclusive practices.

A single-case study is the best option under the condition that it manifests as either a unique or extreme case (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Yin, 2003). KCSC is a unique case because it is one of the 13 clubs currently recognized in Central Ontario that has “special needs programs” stated as part of their club description on the Skate Ontario website (COS Club Directory, 2015). Since case study designs typically provide sufficient evidence to allow for a “nuanced view of reality, including the view that human behavior cannot be meaningfully understood as simply the rule- governed acts found at the lowest levels of the learning process and in much theory” (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 223), I decided to deploy this approach in order to comprehend the inner workings of the organization via my interactions with families, coaches, and board members.

### **Participants**

Mills and Hoeber (2013) noted the importance of interviewing individuals from multiple levels of an organization and considering multiple perspectives because of the usual inconsistency between advocated and enacted practices within an organization. The participants for this study were members of the board of directors of the KCSC, coaches, PWA, and their parents. The board of directors consists of seven individuals (six in attendance for the focus group). In order to get a first-hand account of working directly with the children, I interviewed five coaches based upon their involvement with the PWA. The age range of these coaches was from 17 to 50 years old, and all were female. The children interviewed were the ones identified by parents and the KCSC President as having a special accommodation; this included six individuals of varying disabilities and genders (ranging in age from approximately six to 22 years old). I invited all who were identified as having an accommodation to participate in the study. My invitation yielded agreement from two participants (PWA). The final participants were two parents/legal guardians of the PWA (above) and two additional parents whose children chose not to

participate in interviews. I recruited participants via posted announcement at KCSC for parents, coaches, and PWAs. Following two weeks of the posting, I sent direct email invitations.

### **Data Collection**

I used two methods of data collection: interviews and a focus group. Within two hours of each data collection episode I wrote introspective field notes in order to remind myself of any note-worthy observations or thought processes while at KCSC. Yin (2003) notes that reflection on action is one of the key data collection methods for a case study as it provides a new perspective on the topic. These reflections were based upon the general environment where I conducted the interviews and/or focus group as well as any note-worthy considerations made while present at the arena.

Introspective field notes contribute to practices that support trustworthiness (researcher journal, ongoing audit of researcher processes, key insights, and reminders), triangulation and thoroughness. Triangulation is using multiple forms of cross comparative internal practices (Yin, 2003) and according to Patton (2002) triangulation can also be conducted through multiple data sources, forms of analysis, and/or applications of theory/perspective. In my study, I used two distinct data collection methods (interviews, focus group), four distinct data sets (PWAs' transcripts, parents' transcripts, coaches' transcripts, and the focus group transcript), two distinct forms of data analysis (content based and hermeneutic phenomenologically orientated) with intra and cross transcript analysis of all of the above. Finally, I compared the content based and hermeneutic phenomenologically-orientated findings to construct overarching themes.

### **Interviews**

I conducted interviews to gain first-hand accounts of individuals' descriptions of the subject matter- the sport experience- as interviews are considered to be one of the

most important sources for a case study (Yin, 2003). I conducted interviews with coaches, persons with an accommodation, and parents of PWA. TDP were not interviewed as this was not the focus of my research. In my study, I interviewed four parents of PWA, two of these parent have children in the organization but- their children were not interviewed. The other two parents' children were interviewed. Interviews lasted from 15-60 minutes, based upon the individuals' interest and ability to answer all questions, and were held at the KCSC location in King City, Ontario.

For the interviews with PWAs, I adapted the interview format to meet their information processing abilities. I prepared strategies such as pictures, drawing, and other visual stimuli however, I did not need to use these prompts to elicit descriptions of the experiences of children with KCSC.

There is always the possibility for individuals who are being interviewed to feel a sense of anxiety, emotional stress, anger, and so on, that may distort some of their responses; this is why I offered the option of PWA solo and PWA with a parent to account for these potential challenges (Patton, 2002). One PWA had a parent present. I conducted one interview per participant with an option of follow up, if requested, for a total of 10 interviews (two PWA, four coaches, and four parents). No follow up interviews were requested by any of the participants. I audio-recorded all interviews, with the permission of each participant. Each participant and/or guardian signed a consent form. Participants were offered to view their transcript but did not request a viewing. Interview guides are provided for reference, please see Appendix B.

### **Focus Group**

I conducted a focus group with six members of the BOD of KCSC. I used this approach in the hopes of gathering multiple perspectives since focus groups are used to encourage individuals to speak freely and express opinions (Berg, 2004). The board



members offered different opinions and outlooks in terms of the integration of PWA within the organization thereby creating a wider knowledge base.

As suggested by Berg (2004), I asked all participants in the focus group to sign not only a consent form but also a confidentiality agreement as a precaution. Although much of the information discussed in the focus group is not confidential, signing the confidentiality agreement protects me from potential backlash from participants/ potential participants who may not agree with what was discussed during the focus group before the study was complete. The confidentiality agreement also prevented members of the BOD from releasing information about the study and potentially miscommunicating the purpose of the research to individuals. The focus group took place at one of the board member's house after confirming all participants were comfortable with this location and was audio recorded with permission of the participants.

In order to minimize stress on the part of the board members, I offered an opportunity to follow up in a one on one interview. No board members chose to use this follow up option, however, it gave the members a chance to discuss anything that might have pertained to the research that they may have not felt comfortable discussing with others present.

### **Content-Based Data Analysis**

I used a content analysis approach to the interview transcripts of the coaches and the BOD focus group. I transcribed verbatim all interviews and the focus group. Next I read for key words that reoccurred throughout the data sets and began to develop codes. Codes are essentially, "tags or labels for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information during a study" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 56). Codes constituted the manifest content of the data set. Further analysis of latent content followed once manifest content coding was complete. While doing this, I continued to

take note of any patterns and salience within the data sets. Here, my introspective field notes became particularly important because I was able to review my insights and reflections at the time and take these into account so as to not impose my own preconceived notions onto the data analysis process. Code and pattern clusters were then organized into themes depending on unifying similarities. I read all the data sets completely and noted any salience or patterns that were present. I also sought any connections, overlaps, and resonance between the manifest and latent data analysis.

A description of a typical sequence for the content analysis follows: I read each transcript to get a sense of the whole and to discern patterns and salience (intra interview) before I compared across interview transcripts (cross-interview/intra data set). This cross-interview transcript comparison allowed me to verify patterns with more confidence as well as to see each transcript in relation to each other. At the conclusion of each cross-interview intra-data set review I consulted my introspective field notes to cross check for any unconscious influences that I may have imposed on the salience and pattern from the interview transcripts.

### **Hermeneutic Phenomenological Orientation to Data Analysis**

Because I was interested in how study participants developed meaning from their experiences, I decided to apply a hermeneutic phenomenologically-oriented strategy to my data analysis of PWA and parent interview transcripts. Standal (2014) discusses the importance and usefulness of using hermeneutic phenomenology as an approach when conducting APA studies. Hermeneutic phenomenology is equally effective as an orientation to inquiry since it is committed to describing how people experiencing the phenomenon being explored have made meaningful sense of the experience; that is, what made the experience meaningful for them. I felt a hermeneutic phenomenological orientation to data analysis was important because this was a study of the “eidetics” of the

phenomenon (that which makes the phenomenon what it is) and the meanings the participants construct from their experiences. Standal notes that when it comes to APA “... the capacities, abilities or movement difficulties are relational phenomena that are produced in an interchange between the person and the environment he or she is acting in” (p. 5). This demonstrated the importance of examining not only the experience of the child when it comes to participation, but their environment as well, including physical, environmental, and relational features. This was completed based on the questions asked of the participants and through the analysis of each data set, which will be discussed later in this thesis.

Conducting hermeneutic phenomenological research is important because it helps to “... honor the experiences of APA participants in order to understand how movement and movement contexts are experienced by the participants” (Standal, 2014, p. 7). Although my study was investigating mainly the organization and its perspective on the issue of inclusion, using the PWAs’, their parents and coaches’ perspectives and experiences provided a more useful and effective framework for other community sport organizations to utilize, and grounded the recommendations in the meaning that participants made of their experience at the KCSC. Finally, Standal (2014) notes that much of the research conducted in APA is not empirical that there is a need for action-oriented research, as it aims to change the practice, “...at the level of practical work” (p. 8). My study attempted to achieve this by describing practices with high transferability for practitioners in the community so that they are able to be more inclusive in ways that are meaningful for the participants. For the interviews conducted with the children and the parents, I used van Manen’s proposed phenomenological existential categories of body, space, time, and relation (van Manen, 2007) to uncover the important aspects of the

sport experiences for these individuals. I read each interview transcript, first seeking connections to, and resonances with, body, followed by space, time, and relation. I used different colours for each of the above existential categories to help differentiate each category, with the thesis supervisor overseeing and checking analysis. A sample of this analysis is provided in Appendix C.

**REB Approval**

This research was approved by Brock University's Research Ethics Board. (File # 14-227- Connolly).

## Chapter 4: Findings

This chapter presents my findings based upon the data analysis. As noted above, van Manen's proposed phenomenological existential categories of body, space, time, and relation (van Manen, 2007) were used to analyze the data sets of the parents and children involved in the study. Using this approach, I was able to stay true to the hermeneutic phenomenological orientation of the data analysis, that is that each individual experience was rendered into a consolidating thematized description. Findings for the coaches and the BOD are not broken down the same way as the parents' and PWAs because the current literature is missing the 'inside perspective', which is what my study is attempting to uncover. Codes and themes were used to unveil important messages in the coaches' interviews and the BODs' focus group. I developed content-based codes that lead to patterns and finally larger thematics within each data set. The coaches and BODs codes/themes are presented in Table 1 and Table 2 accordingly. The narrative summary for each PWA and parent data set follows later in this chapter.

Table 1: Coach Codes Themes

### *Coach's Analysis*

CODE	THEME/PATTERN	THEMATIC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- long time with club</li> <li>- years of experience coaching</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- experienced coaches</li> <li>- figure skating fans</li> <li>- long commitment to KCSC/ inclusion</li> </ul>	Commitment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- volunteers prior to coaches</li> <li>- showing up early/staying late</li> <li>- not all coaches have same commitment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- only some coaches come early/stay late</li> <li>- involved in different aspects of the club</li> </ul>	Dedication
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- parent's involvement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- need more</li> </ul>	Communication

- communication with parents/family/coaches	communication from parents regarding child's needs	(awareness)
	- more communication between coaches	
- education/certification	- school degrees	Education/
- schooling	help with	certification
- others	situations	
knowledge/awareness/education	- added aspects for coach certification process	

Table 2: BOD Codes Themes

*BOD Analysis*

CODE	THEME/PATTERN	THEMATIC
- Group decisions	- Working as a team	Diversity/ team
- All BOD have input	- Different opinions for solutions/ideas	
- Coaches rep		
- Do anything for the youth	- Commitment to youth	Commitment / "it's all about the kids"
- Have out-of-town skaters	- Accommodating	
- Don't follow specific rules	- Passionate about the sport but mostly the youth	
- Flexible schedules (payment & on-ice)		
- Never turned anyone away		
- Hang around arena (visible)	- Open-door	Open communication
- Different options for parents to communicate with them	- Available for parents/coaches	
	- Allow opportunities for complaints/suggestions	

From Tables 1 and 2, I discerned that coaches and board members seem to share a sense of commitment to the participants, dedication to the club, and a recognition of the need for open communication. The coaches also mentioned education/certification as a

distinct pattern and the board members mentioned diversity as a distinct pattern. I noted these patterns and overlaps between coaches and board members and then moved on to summarize the hermeneutic phenomenological thematics of the parents and the PWA.

I created a table based on van Manen's proposed phenomenological existential categories of body, space, time, and relation (van Manen, 2007) for the parent and PWA data sets. These findings are presented in Table 3 followed by the descriptive narrative summaries for each individual interview based on body, space, time, and relation as the narrative allowed me to complete the hermeneutic phenomenological orientation of the analysis.

Table 3: Parents and PWA Codes Themes

*Parent and PWA Analysis*

<b>Body</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Falling down (PWA/P)</li> <li>- Different aspects of accommodation(P)</li> <li>- Getting hurt(PWA/P)</li> </ul>
<b>Space</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Perceived space(PWA)</li> <li>- Energy of individual/ needed space(PWA/P)</li> <li>- Comfortable in the environment(PWA/P)</li> <li>- Private ice time(PWA/P)</li> <li>- Shared space(PWA/P)</li> <li>- Personal space (PWA)</li> </ul>
<b>Time</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Length of time with club (P)</li> <li>- Length of skating session (P)</li> </ul>
<b>Relation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- More communication with coaches/BOD (P)</li> <li>- Friendships (PWA/P)</li> <li>- Relationship with coaches</li> <li>- More 'community' feeling/camaraderie(P)</li> <li>- Different types/forms of communication (P)</li> <li>- Frequency of communication (P)</li> </ul>

*Note.* PWA= (PWA) and Parent= (P)

I then compared all codes, patterns/themes, and thematics from all data sets (coaches, BOD, parents, PWA) to create overarching themes which led to my five final recommendations, these are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

*Overarching Themes of Data Sets*

<b>Open-effective communication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- More communication between all involved</li> <li>- Different forms of communication</li> <li>- Work as a team</li> </ul>
<b>Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- More education in certification process</li> <li>- Awareness (other skaters)</li> </ul>
<b>Sense of community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- More involvement from all coaches</li> <li>- Social events for youth to get involved</li> </ul>
<b>Space and time</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Perceived space</li> <li>- Memories of event/s persist into shared space</li> <li>- Private ice time</li> </ul>
<b>Child-focus</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Accommodating</li> <li>- No extra charges/fees</li> <li>- Dedication/ commitment</li> <li>- Passion</li> </ul>

Only certain criteria regarding the participants were included in the presentation of the results due to confidentiality and the guidelines provided by the Ethics Board. Following the narratives of the parents and the PWA, the coaches and the BOD are discussed as two separate, but whole entities. Due to the nature of the study and the hermeneutic phenomenological orientation of analysis used, focusing on the parents and the PWA as distinct and discrete participants allowed for a deeper understanding of their perspective, providing conclusions grounded in their life experiences. All names used in this chapter are pseudonyms to protect the identity of participants.



## **Parents' Interviews**

### **Parent 1 analysis: Rachel.**

Reviewing the transcription of Rachel's interview revealed that both body and relation were the two main contributors to her child having a successful and enjoyable sporting experience. Rachel and her child have been a part of the KCSC for approximately one year. I will first examine relations. On multiple occasions, Rachel discussed how her child had issues within different sporting organizations making friends because she was either removed from a program, or “downgraded.” “Even at school she just did not feel like she fit in anymore.” This statement was referring to how she had been told after a few years that her child would no longer be able to be in the group swim lesson and needed to go into what they referred to as “the baby pool”. Rachel's situation is a little unique in that her child also has different needs for accommodations and part of one of these accommodations is picking the scabs that develop from eczema and eating them. This would be more of a bodily experience, it is how the individual experiences and feels about himself or herself. Unfortunately, this body experience affects Rachel's child's relationships within different settings. As a parent, she has had to deal with a lot of backlash from other parents who witness this happening and complain. This aspect of the accommodation has prevented the individual from creating meaningful relationships in most sport settings. With KCSC, however, this has not proven to be an issue according to Rachel. The child has been able to develop good relationships, for example, “she has a good volunteer there...who gets along well with her.” The environment has been positive for Rachel. She states that, “I feel like... I'm part of something, I mean you have been ostracized for so long, for so many years and I feel like I belong, like I'm going to go in and watch my daughter skate.” When asked about having any negative experiences from coaches, board members, or other parents Rachel mentioned that there are no issues when

it comes to KCSC. Furthermore, Rachel discussed that KCSC is, “probably the best ones [sport/recreation organization] we have dealt with... so far. They are always cheerful when you come in, they say hi to you, they aren't stand-offish.” Rachel addressed however, that she believes that a great deal of the success or issues taking place has to do with the temperament of the instructor. This point is connected to relations.

With Rachel, spatial concerns did arise as well. Rachel discussed how she has had issues because of her child's energy and attention span. At gymnastics and swimming her child would be moving around quite a bit and even would take off alone if something caught his/her eye. When asked about the biggest challenge(s) of getting Rachel's child into sport she responded, "... keeping [child] there because a lot of times [child] gets kicked out.” As mentioned above, often times this was due to the factors connected to certain needs of the individual affecting relationships with others within organizations. Rachel's only recommendation in terms of improving KCSC was increased communication regarding skate sharpening and information about her child's involvement and progress specifically, and news/events within the club. Rachel mentioned she currently emails the volunteer who works with her child in order to get updates but she would be happy if she could get more information from the club or coaches. This would qualify as relation and ways to improve it.

**Parent 2 analysis: Monica.**

Monica's interview demonstrated that relation is the main contributor to her child having a successful sport experience, with space, body, and time mentioned as well. Monica and her child have been part of the KCSC for over three years. To begin, Monica's child is very much about following the rules. She discussed a situation when her child became frustrated during a soccer game because others were not following the rules. In response, her child decided to just stand by the net and wait for the ball to come

to him/her. Because their child was not happy and had not formed any friendships, the parents decided to withdraw the child from. The next relational factor that Monica noted was the fact that, in her opinion and in her experiences, success has a lot to do with the temperament of the instructor or coach. This could make a big difference in the success of the child because it is important to form a good relationship with their peers and their coach/instructor. If the coach or instructor has the patience, knowledge, and sensitivity to handle someone who may need a little more attention than others, it will likely help.

Next, Monica discussed her experiences with KCSC. One of the first elements she mentioned was that the Rink Manager always goes out of his way to say “hello” to the children and makes a big deal whenever one of the children comes in but in particular one of the special needs children. She discussed the club itself as well and stated, “they are always very welcoming and it’s been a great experience, having that when [child] comes through the door and have people treat [child] like that to say 'we're glad you're here'...”

Furthermore, she touched on the temperament of the instructor again but in a different way, Monica noted “some people have this instinct or ability to figure out kids and others they can learn it [the instinct or ability], but doesn’t necessarily mean they can apply it.”

Monica discussed the coaches at KCSC and noted, “especially the ones who work with the Special O[lympians] really seem to have that internal ability to figure out the kids and work with them in a special way that is calming and soothing and.... good.” Next, Monica was asked about how or if her child enjoys KCSC. Because her child is quieter and does not like to discuss his/her experiences very much, she noted that “well as far as I know [child] enjoys the social aspect.” She also addressed some of the friendships and partnerships that have developed for her child through participating in this sport with other skaters. A very important relational aspect that Monica discussed was when she was

asked whether she feels that anything differentiates KCSC from other organizations with which she has dealt, instantly she referred to a coach and a board member who have made the experience memorable. She explained, “they have created a culture of well, not acceptance, just the way it works, it’s inclusion. They [the coach and BOD] are no different, [coach] teaches all of their skaters the same, even the special guys, they are accepted.” Finally, on the topic of relationships with other skaters, it has been a fairly positive experience for her child, mainly with the other special needs skaters. However, Monica stated that sometimes there are some spatial issues with the other skaters on the ice and having to be extra careful while special needs skaters are sharing the ice. Monica also noted that these issues are very minimal and not a major concern to her. Space and body are now addressed further and how Monica discussed aspects that contribute to her child being integrated into the programming and participating fully.

To begin, when Monica addressed her child's experience in soccer, she mentioned that there was too much noise and commotion. This would relate to space because it is how the individual perceives the space around him/her and how it makes him/her feel. Additionally, when considering skating at KCSC with other skaters and the potential relations (e.g., friendships, bystanders) and being in a more confined space affects how this individual is able to adjust to the sport and the overall environment (space/ice). This in turn has the possibility of affecting the relationships that are formed, as illustrated by the frustration the individual experienced in soccer. Monica made an important reference to time at the beginning of her interview. She explained that she has to negotiate time with her child, so for a two- hour session, the child may only skate for an hour and a half depending on what the two of them negotiated.

**Parent 3 analysis: Phoebe.**

Phoebe and her child have been a member of KCSC for about three years. When interviewing Phoebe only a few body, space, time, and relation aspects came through in her responses, however she noted two important points. The first refers to body where she noted that her child “can do it [skating] without falling down.” The falling down is the part that would refer to body in this situation, and it appeared to be a concern to this parent as she felt the need to emphasize that her child was not falling down after only two lessons. Phoebe also discussed that sports have helped her child with body coordination (body) and social skills (relations). Finally, Phoebe stated that with KCSC her child is so happy “[child] do[esn’t] want to leave even.” This demonstrates that her child is enjoying his/her time and that her notions of his/her social skill development and relationship building within the sport setting are probably quite accurate.

**Parent 4 analysis: Janice.**

Janice's interview provided additional information because she has two children in her family requiring special accommodations (one currently skates at KCSC), however, the family has had over two years of experience with the KCSC. Janice did, however, mainly discuss relational aspects of her experiences, with body and space as other notable categories. The first relation facet that Janice mentioned referred to her child in a swimming program and the fact that the individual was able to garner better relationships with teachers because the organization seemed to pair up the child and teacher based on gender and age. With this pairing the child was able to discuss topics, such as sports, and develop a better relationship and have an enjoyable experience. Janice noted that the communication and environment at KCSC is, “not the friendliest.” Often times other parents did not strike up conversations with her and she would need to be the initiator. This would be both relational and space as Janice mentions the overall environment as

not being very friendly. Janice did not discuss specific aspects of the physical environment that made it unwelcoming, but rather as a whole and not feeling very comfortable to be a part of this environment. In terms of communication again, Janice was very unhappy as she mentioned, “I find the communication is lacking, really lacking.” She was specifically referring to an incident regarding the music available for her child’s skating program which occurred earlier that year, furthermore, she did mention communication as an area for improvement for KCSC. When asked about feeling supported by KCSC she explained, “no, not in that way communicative wise, no I don't feel supported” however she noted how happy everyone is to have her child skating there and that her child is also very happy to be there and therefore that makes her happy, “[her child] knows everyone there so I know it’s a safe place.” This comment would also relate to space once again as Janice feels the physical space itself is safe and she is comfortable with her child being there and skating.

Janice noted that there were at certain times, for example, during competition or carnival season, when her child came home more stressed because the skating expectations were a little higher. She saw this as another example of problematic communication. She explained that she would prefer that communication was better with parents and suggested that it would be helpful if, perhaps, information was given in writing rather than providing the children with verbal instructions. “But the support just at certain times, like that when it's really needed, it kinda lacks, but then also I know the club is busy but on the other hand you have volunteers, so get a volunteer person to call me or something.” Janice mentioned the frequency and form of communication a few times throughout her interview, and suggested different communication methods that she felt would help improve the process. When asked if she had discussed her concerns with

the coaches or board members, she stated that she had talked to them but “there is only so much advocating I can do until I just kind of put my hands up and say okay we'll figure something out.” This statement underscores Janice’s frustration with the communication practices of KCSC. Janice understood that KCSC is a busy club and that the coach is not working exclusively for her child, however, she stated, “I'm the one who calls and asks the questions and I guess you should be saying well you should be the one calling, but maybe the coach and I should get down to that” so it appears the proper conversations have not taken place to address this concern.

Janice would prefer that her child was not integrated with the others and, instead, had separate programming. Her reasoning for this was primarily related to the importance of building relationships and having that "camaraderie" with the other Special Olympic participants. This was something that she was hopeful would not occur, not just for the children, but also among the parents to connect as well. She explained “I wish even as parents, that we could get together, not necessarily more, but even like the odd time that we do, that we try to go to competitions and we talk to one another, it’s nice but then we all split.”

The body aspects that Janice discussed throughout the interview are presented next. First, she discussed an experience with baseball and was able to tell the volunteer coaches when her child appeared to need a rest because of his/her special condition. The coaches respected that and the rest aided in the child's progression. Janice stated that with KCSC she felt that sometimes her child is pushed a little too much, however she realized sometimes it is just her child wanting a rest (and not necessarily needing it for medical reasons) and therefore this can cause some issues and confusion with the coaches. Janice

noted that when a rest is needed it is obvious because of the imbalances and falling that typically occurs when her child is tired.

### **Review of Parents' Analysis**

Overall, each parents' main area of recommended growth for KCSC was to have better, more open communication with them as the parents. A couple of parents mentioned more communication with coaches directly, through weekly or bi-weekly updates so that they would know how their child is progressing and to inform them of important activities taking place at the club. This need for communication seemed to extend beyond the information provided on their website. One recommendation to address this issue of communication was the publication of newsletters that could be handed out with general information about competitions, carnival, test days, and other events within the club of which the parents need to be made aware.

Body and relation were also identified as important factors in the success of each child's integration. Being aware of how each child regards his/her personal space and the awareness he/she has of others in the setting were critical to effective integration. Mainly coaches would need to be aware of this aspect so that they can coach the individual effectively and therefore create a more meaningful integration experience. Lastly, relations were very important because they appeared to be directly connected to the child's enjoyment and their wish to participate. Each parent noted that his/her child was very happy skating at KCSC, and in some cases, the child did not want to leave afterward because of his/her love for the sport and the relationships that were built. This suggested that building relations with not only peers but also coaches is very important to a child's integration. Building peer relationships was sometimes difficult but a few of the parents interviewed mentioned that perhaps other children on the ice should be made aware of certain facts about these special needs' skaters to assist in building understanding and



friendships. This is not to suggest that each child in the club needs to be briefed on exactly what is the nature of the special need. This briefing is more about informing all skaters to be aware of the spatial perception that the PWA may have and encouraging TDP to be sensitive to their surroundings and to be respectful of other people and their space; this is how communication, body, and space are all intertwined.

Finally, most parents interviewed seemed to be very happy with their experience(s) with KCSC thus far. There are a few areas of concern/ growth that were mentioned throughout each interview including communication practices, and ice time. Janice appeared to be least happy with the communication and a few other aspects (e.g., ice time, number of people on the ice for each session), however, her child is happy and enjoying his/her time at the club and therefore there has been no real need or wish to switch clubs.

### **Children's Interviews**

#### **Child 1 analysis: Susan.**

Reviewing Susan's interview transcription revealed that space is very important to this individual, with relation a close second. To begin, Susan noted that her favourite part about being at skating is the feeling of the actual ice. She also discussed the relationships that she formed with some of her peers over her time with KCSC. She also addressed how, "... kids whiz by you and I guess they didn't see me or I didn't see them or I just didn't stop in time, I don't know..." This quotation related to Susan's spatial recognition and how others were interacting with her, within this space. The above statement described an incident with a fellow skater where Susan ended up getting cut by a blade. This incident appeared to make Susan more hesitant about her space on the ice and others around her because she referred to it throughout the interview as a negative memory. Additionally, she changed the nights she skates because of this incident. Relating to the

physical ice and the space again, Susan was asked what she enjoyed most while at skating. Her first response was being on the ice, followed by trying not to fall, both of which are body factors. When asked what Susan liked least about being at skating, after a few moments of thinking and hesitation, she mentioned that it is sometimes the skaters and feeling "uneasy when there are skaters going around, whipping around." This also related to the physical aspects of the experience and Susan's perception of space. What Susan perceives as personal space may be different than the perception of another individual on the ice and the reality of the physical space. She noted that she would like it if they [other skaters in the club] were not skating at all and expressed wanting to be on the ice without advanced skaters, instead, with a smaller, more specialized group. Finally, when Susan was asked if she wanted to add anything at the end of the interview, she stated, "no, I guess if anything comes out of this that I can get a little more, smaller group on the ice." This smaller group on the ice would refer to space, however it appeared as though Susan may have been using the interview to communicate issues. She replied to questions in a very specific way to do so by stating for example, "if anything were to come of this" with "this" referring to the interview. The child seemed to be "hinting at" the expectation that she may receive private ice time based on this interview.

Moving into relations, as mentioned above Susan claimed that she really liked seeing her friends she had made over her time at skating. She indicated that this is an important aspect of her favourite part of skating. When asked about what Susan would like to see from the coaches to help her more, she mentioned being more interactive. This would refer to communication and therefore part of relations. She elaborated by mentioning she would like to be challenged more and to work on different skills. Additionally, Susan was asked to describe her coach, or ideally how she would like her

coach to be, and she explained "a bit nicer, a bit more friendlier, a bit more nicer but other than that." This demonstrated the importance of the coach building positive relationships with Susan. She noted as well that she had a lot of friends at skating, even though many of them are younger. Later, when asked about what made her unhappy about the club, Susan once again mentioned, "not being very interactive" with her as they [the coaches] can be and more interactive/attention from coaches was something would like to see happen more. When using the term "interactive" Susan was referring to having more one-on-one direct coaching time. Since this was brought up more than once by Susan, it was clearly of great importance to her and something she would like to see addressed.

**Child 2 analysis: Joey.**

Joey's interview revealed time as an important aspect for him. When asked about the sports in which he participates and how long he had been skating, Joey only assigned a timeline to figure skating of, "100 years." This was evidence that Joey felt as though he had been skating for much longer than he actually had been and therefore skating was likely an enjoyable experience. The excitement was when it came to skating was also evident in the tone of voice Joey used during the interview. Joey seemed to relate everything to a specific day and/or a time as he recognized what day he did what sport and when he could or could not go to something because of what day it was.

Relation also came up in Joey's interview. When asked about skating and what made it fun for him and if he had friends at skating he replied positively. Interestingly, Joey was not able to name his coach at skating, this could mean that the coach relationships are not of grave importance to him. This aspect of the relationship however, did not seem to affect his happiness with the sport and his experience.

### **Review of Children's Interviews**

Overall, both children seemed to reveal different factors that contribute to their happiness and success with KCSC. Susan was more centred around space, whereas Joey dealt more with time. Both however, noted the importance of relationships to successful experiences, Joey with peers and Susan with coaches and peers with more emphasis on the relationship with the coaches.

### **Coaches' Interviews**

The coaches involved in this study are both part-time and full-time coaches. All are paid staff and most have jobs/careers outside of KCSC and being a figure skating coach. Reviewing the interviews with four coaches of KCSC revealed some interesting findings. Four different coaches from the club were interviewed and a pervasive common theme among the interviews was that they were all previous members of the club, with most having volunteered as Program Assistants (PAs) prior to becoming coaches. Additionally, three of the four coaches had been coaching for over seven years and they had various certifications and qualifications (e.g., coaching, education degrees). One of the coaches interviewed was also a member of the Board of Directors (BOD).

When asked about the environment of the club and how coaches would describe it, all responses were fairly positive, however, Estelle and Judy both discussed the need for the coaches to come together more because there is currently a divide amongst the coaches in the club based on members each person coaches and the level at which those individuals are performing. Carol noted that the environment at the club had been good overall. However, she has had a lot of experience coaching at other clubs and stated, "I have worked for many skating clubs and a lot of the time the environment is so toxic that I didn't even want to go into work most days. That isn't the case here [KCSC]." Another important note from both Estelle and Judy was the need to reach out to the community

more and to create a more tight-knit community within the club. Both also noted the need for more volunteers on the BOD. Judy suggested sub-committees for different aspects that would allow for more individualized and focused planning.

Both Estelle and Judy were asked about how they would suggest fixing the divide amongst the coaches since both mentioned that even the skaters felt and recognized this is happening. Estelle mentioned that a community event organized by the coaches, where all needed to get involved, would likely help in progressively combating this issue. Judy agreed with this idea and suggested focusing on fun rather than competition a little bit more. Estelle did not feel as though this is something that would change in the near future. Estelle and Judy both noted however, that there was not the same dedication and involvement from all the coaches. Estelle discussed how some coaches were there very early to help with skates or answer questions and stayed afterward if needed, whereas other coaches came just in time for the session and left right when it was completed.

The coaches were all asked about their involvement with decision making in the club. They all agreed that KCSC had an open-door policy and that coaches are as involved as possible. They have a Coaches' Representative who sits on the BOD to bring forward any issues or concerns they may have. Carol also noted that there were not many issues that had been forwarded to the board and changes, when needed, were usually undertaken quickly.

All coaches were asked about any tools provided to help work with PWA. All replied that they had many different tools at their fingertips, however it was also a matter of knowing how and when to use these different tools. Cathy stated that the BOD suggested to do whatever is needed in order to make it work (within reason, of course. This could be time, money, or space). Having volunteers available or asking specific

people to volunteer with certain PWA was also a strategy that the coaches utilized to be able to work with these skaters. Estelle mentioned that the club had pylons, markers, and signs to help address different needs with each individual as well as ensuring that music was turned up to the maximum if there was a child who was hearing impaired. She also noted that the club was flexible with pricing and the skating times. These coaches were also asked about having to deal with a child who experienced a severe meltdown (e.g., anxiety, crying, physical violence) while on the ice and how they addressed the situation. Estelle discussed her educational background as an integral part of her successful handling of those situations, not only with PWA but also with all skaters in general. Judy mentioned that each situation was different and that she would calm the skater down and returned to coaching without anyone feeling left out. She also would use the same strategies in her classroom as a teacher to calm a child. Cathy's instinct was to ask one of the other coaches to help or bring the child to his/her parent until he/she had calmed down enough to return to the group. Cathy has neither the years of experience coaching nor the educational background as her peers. Carol stated that most coaches were on board for helping with the PWA, and that there was really only one coach at KCSC who did not want to work with these individuals.

Next, the need and wish for tools to help coaches of KCSC or Skate Canada (SC) to be successful was discussed. Estelle noted that parents did not always disclose the information about their PWA upfront and that could sometimes cause problems because the coach was not expecting certain issues, such as a meltdown, to arise. Both Judy and Estelle believed it would be beneficial for SC to put training or learning modules into the existing certification process for all skating coaches. This would ensure that everyone had at least some knowledge about PWA before starting their coaching experience. Judy also

addressed educating other coaches on how to handle various situations with PWA and to have parents share strategies on how to handle these situations. Carol discussed the importance of having more involvement from SC and Special Olympics to ensure that coaches were ready to properly facilitate their programming. Carol also noted that integration was wonderful, however, PWA needed some ice time alone for better results. Cathy also made this suggestion noting PWA could sometimes get easily distracted compared to their TDP which impedes both the learning and coaching of all individuals involved.

Finally, when Carol was asked about receiving complaints from other skaters or parents about the PWA, she responded that there had not been issues in the past except for one small incident that was due to a lack of communication between the coaches. Lastly, she noted that KCSC had a few PWA who came from out of town just to work with the staff at their club as evidence that KCSC is known for its inclusiveness.

### **Board of Directors Focus Group**

Six of the seven members of the BOD participated in a focus group, with myself as the moderator. Below is an overview of the findings based on the data analysis from this focus group.

The current BOD has been together for two years now. The focus group began with members of the BOD being asked about how they made decisions, to which everyone agreed that the process always involved the whole group. As such, the President's voice did not take precedence or overshadow any of the voices of other members. Depending on the decisions that needed to be made, the BOD would consider what other clubs in the area are doing or the financial status of the club, and any other factors that could affect a particular decision.

When it comes to meetings for members of the BOD, issues are brought forward by board members, coaches, or parents and together they come up with a plan of action. They allow parents to make suggestions for meetings about items that need to be addressed. Parents can do this simply by speaking with a board member directly, or they have a suggestion box set up in the lobby of the arena that parents and members can also use to voice their concerns. One aspect that emerged with members of the board is that KCSC is a small club and this can sometimes drive a wedge between board members, parents, and/or even coaches due to lack of resources, communication with members, and size of staff (i.e., the seven members of the BOD and the 10 coaches), however members of the BOD tried to be as present as possible during skate sessions or events to avoid any animosity.

The values of the club were also discussed. A recurring theme was the mentality of placing children as the top priority. Erica stated “my very first meeting, I always remember it ... I remember [Board Member] saying, we only do this for the kids, and that is when I said you know what, for sure I want to be a part of this board because of her statement.” This quotation from Erica demonstrated that the BOD truly valued children and wanted to create the best experience possible for them. In addition, Mona addressed the fact that it is about the children and it is not about feeling any type of power by being a member of the board. It is about making the necessary adjustments so that every child can participate. The board at KCSC is mainly comprised of females with the exception of one male. The male board member, Chandler, noted that the BOD consisted of people from all different viewpoints which allows them to better discuss issues and concerns because they are able to address them from more than one perspective. Emily made a very powerful statement in noting “it has always been my focus that as long as we have a



few bucks to get us to the next season, that's what it's about. It's not about whether or not we have fifty grand [\$50,000] in the bank to look professional, we don't want that. If this little skater truly wants to skate and you know, Mom and Dad can't afford it, I like to bring it to the board and say can we do this, can we do that?" Once again, statements such as this reiterated what the members of the BOD have already mentioned that their main concern is the child and them getting involved in figure skating. Members of the BOD mentioned that the club must be sustainable financially and they may not be able to make certain concessions each and every year but they do their best to accommodate their skaters each year. Emily also noted that it is important for the BOD to listen to the professionals (i.e., coaches) and that coaches are the key to success because they are the front line contact with both the skaters and the parents.

The focus group discussion then moved into the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and integration. Members of the BOD were not really aware of the AODA. Some had vague ideas but it was not what they were currently using as guidelines when making decisions. The BOD at KCSC currently, does not follow any specific guidelines, however, they noted that now that they are aware, they will examine AODA more thoroughly. However, they had never turned a skater away because of an accommodation that was needed. The board members took it upon themselves to call up a former skater of the club to volunteer with one of the PWA. Alice stated "I got a phone call from a high school and they said, 'we have this girl, she was turned away from another program, she loves to skate and we hear you take skaters' and I just said okay, we'll take her I just gotta find someone, give me a little bit of time, and she doesn't even live in our area, but not every skating club will take them." Furthermore, when members of the BOD attempted to get additional ice time to allow the PWA to have some private

ice for themselves at another arena they were told that because the PWA did not live in that township they were unable to request the ice. The members of the BOD at KCSC are currently trying to figure out other possible solutions to get the PWA some extra ice, even if it is just for one half hour. The board also explained that, from what they had seen, most of the other children on the ice were very accommodating to the PWA, however they also noted the importance of being informed and having open communication. It was also mentioned that Special Olympics has organized free seminars for coaches, however these seminars are always held during the day which tends to limit who is able to attend because of work and/or school commitments. The BOD received some government funding for KCSC that allowed them to make these accommodations, however these funds were minimal.

Members of the BOD were then asked about what a typical evening at KCSC was like when there was a skating session. They agreed that all children are treated the same as much as possible. If someone is not listening, or someone is misbehaving, they are redirected and brought back to focus. PWA have one-on-one care until it is no longer needed. These children are identified, but not separated from the groups. Most of the board members were not even sure of the exact number of PWA they had because of the integration and because it was not a main focus of the club. Erica also noted that her child, a teenager, was a volunteer with many of these children and assisted the coaches with tasks provided, and that her child was able to grow through these experiences and that a lot of pride came from working with these other children.

Finally, the group was asked how they make the accommodations for integration and their main response was that the PWA will have one-on-one assistance (with a coach or volunteer) until they no longer need it, even if the assistance is needed for years. They

had an individual who remained with one-on-one care for multiple years and it took him a while to learn how to skate backward, but they made it happen. There was another skater who was refused at another club because of the need for one-on-one care so the parents took their child to KCSC, where they remained until the child was older and the parents moved away. The board members also discussed the fact that when a parent registered a child for skating, they did not ask the parents if that child had a disability or needed an accommodation. They were hopeful that parents would be forthcoming with the information, but they recognized that sometimes it is a sense of fear for the parents because they have faced issues in the past with either being turned away or charged extra. They emphasized that support should be available no matter what the circumstances. Additionally, they discussed the fact that, for the last National Competition the club fundraised in order to buy skating bags for all the children going to Nationals to allow them to feel special and part of something bigger. This initiative was undertaken entirely by the members of the BOD. Putting the children first is ‘second nature’ for the members of the BOD. Their instinct is to do what is necessary so that any individual is able to figure skate at their club.

### **Data Analysis Summary**

Overall, the data analysis revealed some interesting findings. The important factor that stood out most was the contradictions among the parents, coaches, and members of the BOD when it comes to communication. *Communication*, or lack thereof, was a main concern for all four parents involved in this study, however members of the BOD felt as though they had very good communication and an open-door policy. Additionally, the coaches mentioned that although it is very “open-door” within KCSC, better communication between parents and coaches is needed as well as among all of the coaches themselves. The next common thread across all the different cohorts (parent,

coaches, participants, and board members) was the sense of *community*. The coaches and one parent felt as though the community aspect was lacking and a few suggestions were provided by different individuals on how to address this issue including holding more events and providing individualized ice time. This finding leads into the next common finding that consists of *space/ice time*. Most interviewees agreed that PWA deserved some ice time to themselves, however they still felt it was important to integrate these children with other children as well. Along similar lines, ensuring that individuals who are on the ice are aware of who is around them and the space that different people may need when completing a task are important. *Relationships* were another important factor that came up was raised multiple times throughout the interviews and the focus group. This referred to cultivating relationships with peers, coaches, parents, and even members of the BOD. This is consistent with communication. Creating positive and effective relationships amongst all groups will allow everyone to have a happier, more enjoyable skating experience. Finally, members of the BOD and the coaches for the most part, seemed to agree on the “*it’s all about the kids*” approach. The BOD in particular appear to have this mentality as second nature. They do not think twice about the idea of inclusion, it just happens for them because they genuinely want to see the children happy and participating. Although, a few of the coaches noted that certain coaches were more invested than others in this approach but for the most part everyone was on board and ready and willing to learn/help. Additionally, the parents all stated that their children were happy to be at KCSC there and had a positive experience most of the time, except for one or two more negative situations.

## **Chapter 5: Reflections, Conclusions, and Recommendations**

### **Reflections**

This chapter is a reflective overview of the connections between the findings and the literature. As well, I propose guidelines for sport organizations, like KCSC, to consider when integrating individuals with an accommodation and finally, I offer recommendations for future research and address gaps in this study.

### **Overview of literature and connections to findings**

In this section I discuss the overarching hermeneutic phenomenological existential themes of relation, space, and time, as these were the most prominent phenomenologically derived findings. I present these embedded in the cross data set thematics in the following order: social including relationships and communication, sense of community, personal space and ice time, and education. Finally, I identify gaps between my study and the literature reviewed in chapter two.

#### **Social thematic.**

The importance of the social aspect. This social aspect was a major finding in my research as it was evident in all the data sources. The social aspect dealt with both relationships and communication. Considering relationships first, both PWA participants mentioned the importance of having friends while at skating and being able to make friends, as did two parents, Janice and Rachel. The literature review discussed earlier noted the importance of sport participation to make friends and to avoid social segregation, marginalization, and poor psychological development (Law et al., 2007; Murphy & Carbone, 2008; Riner & Sellhorst, 2013). Through KCSC, PWA had been able to build and maintain friendships. As Susan, a PWA, mentioned in her interview, one of the most exciting parts about going to skating is seeing her friends. The parent, Monica, also discussed her child's experience with friends at skating as being a motivator

to continue to continue to go to practice. A relational dynamic that the literature review in chapter two does not mention is the relationship between the parents and the coaches, and the members of the BOD. This was a consistent theme throughout each data set. Monica, in particular addressed having a special “it” quality (i.e., an innate ability and/or instinct) to be really effective when working with PWA and how many of the coaches possessed this quality. Rachel also had positive experiences with KCSC when it came to both the BOD and the coaches, however, she discussed very negative experiences with coaches in other sport organizations.

Another aspect of relationships that does not appear to be addressed in the literature was communication. This was the main issue of the parents who were interviewed with regards to KCSC. The parents felt that there was not enough consistent and effective communication between either the coaches and/or members of the BOD and themselves. A recommendation to resolve this issue is discussed later. Two coaches pointed out the lack of communication among coaches as well as with the parents.

**Sense of community thematic.**

This concept of communication led into the next important relational finding: sense of community. Janice in particular, spoke about camaraderie and felt there was not enough of it within the club, especially for the PWA. Both Estelle and Judy, as coaches, strongly believed that lack of a sense of community was a major fault of KCSC and it needed to be addressed. Interestingly, once again, this sense of community was not an aspect that came up in the literature review in chapter two. It does of course tie in with relations and cultivating relationships within and through sport, however the literature review does not mention the sense of community as being important to those involved. Susan discussed how she would like her coaches and overall experience to be more

“interactive”- this could relate to all aspects of relationships that were previously discussed.

**Personal space and ice time thematic.**

Next, I address personal space and ice time. A phenomenological understanding of personal space and one’s perception of personal space is not typically discussed in the literature specific to PWA in sport and integration; however, it appeared to be very important as it was mentioned throughout the interviews. Susan in particular would have preferred having some ice time where only the PWA are on the ice. She discussed how fast the other skaters on the ice can be and how it affects her overall experience. Janice also discussed the idea of having individualized ice time, as did members of the BOD, however Carol noted the importance of having individualized ice time as well when the PWA are integrated and included with other skaters. Monica also noted that sometimes other skaters may not be as accepting or aware of the PWA and thus, they may need additional space or time in order to complete a task.

**Education thematic.**

Other skaters not being aware led into the next finding: education. Judy and Estelle noted that it would be beneficial to include a section about how to coach PWA in the coaching certification process. This was congruent with the literature as both Shields and Synnot (2014) and Klein and Hollingshead (2015) noted that sport personnel and/or teachers do not feel knowledgeable enough to effectively implement adaptive programming so that children can be integrated properly into the sport setting. This is certainly an area for improvement and a recommendation for KCSC and other sport organizations. Education, in this study, also referred to parents educating the coaches on best practices when it comes to handling difficult situations with their child.

Coaches and members of the BOD agreed that parents were not always forthcoming with details about their child and their accommodation.

**Notable non-occurrences.**

In the review of literature, I discussed aspects such as economic (costs), physical environment, and policies as being barriers to sport participation for PWA (Law et al., 2007, Murphy et al., 2008; and Overmars- Marx et al., 2014). The KCSC does not charge additional fees to support PWA. A situation in particular was discussed by the members of the BOD, where they were approached by the school board to accept a PWA and a member of the BOD decided to call a former member of the club to see if they would volunteer as a one-on-one guide for this individual and the former member agreed. Additionally, members of the BOD as well as two of the coaches noted that the club was very accommodating, for example, BOD members would allow payment plans and were flexible with parents and even with skating schedules. The physical environment was another aspect that did not come up in this study. No participants mentioned any limitations due to the physical environment of the club. Perhaps it has not been an issue to the extent that individuals felt the need to express concern.

Finally, policies were a barrier mentioned in the literature that were not identified as an issue in this study. Interestingly enough, members of the BOD noted that they were unaware of any governmental policies, and they felt that inclusion was something that needed to happen and that there was usually a solution to make an accommodation. This was related to the “it’s all about the kids” mentality that members of the BOD did their best to uphold. Additionally, parents did not mention policies as a barrier to participation either. Once again, this may be due to the fact that it is not as serious an issue and therefore nobody felt the need to discuss it in the interviews and focus group process.



An important gap in this study that was not congruent with existing literature is the health benefits and/or risks. One can argue that social health can affect overall health even though physical ailments were not directly discussed. This would be an area for future research to be discussed later.

### **A Word about Organizational Culture**

In the findings section when I presented the patterns that I discerned from analysis of the BOD focus group transcript, I mentioned the phrase ‘second nature’. That is, it seemed that it was second nature for the BOD to place the children first and have that as a shared and unspoken value. This relates to Saks and Haccoun’s (2016) research in organizational culture whereby members of an organization have internalized the values to the extent where they no longer need to be made explicit. However, given that for several parents, communication remains a concern it is possible that KCSC might want to take steps to make its organizational values more explicit in more formalized training and development of coaches and staff.

### **Recommendations**

The recommendations I discuss next were developed based on the findings of this study in conjunction with previous literature. It is important to note that these recommendations may not be applicable to every single community sport organization, however, it is the hope that leaders of organizations interested in inclusion will be able to use and implement some or all of these recommendations. Additionally, sharing these recommendations with the KCSC will allow them to refine their current practices. By implementing the recommendations, the sport participants will likely benefit because they are receiving the necessary and deserved sport opportunities and the enhanced sensitivity associated with these recommendations. Sport organizations will benefit because they will be able to run a more effective and inclusive sport experience for all. These

recommendations can extend beyond the club level to the Provincial and/or National Sport Organization as well. The recommendations are as follows:

1. Open and effective communication. This is the most important element to consider when integrating PWA into programming with their TDP. Parents and coaches need an open line of communication. Parents need to be forthcoming with the fact that their child requires an accommodation and coaches need to relay important information back to the parents directly. The frequency of communication between coaches and parents needs to be negotiated before the child begins the sport experience. A form to be filled out by both parents and coaches outlining the needs of the child and expectations of parents would help to ensure that appropriate accommodations are implemented (See Appendix D). It would also be helpful for the club to develop a newsletter for the organization that is published at least, once a month, outlining important events taking place within the organization of which parents need to be made aware. This newsletter can be a digital copy or hard copy dependent upon the needs of the members as well as the costs to the club.
2. Education. This is especially important for coaches who are working with PWA. Education could be part of the introductory coaching certification and would alleviate the misconceptions and anxiety of working with PWA. It is important to note that clubs do not provide certification for their coaches, however, it is possible for these sport organizations to develop their own training sessions for all new coaches and volunteers who join. My recommendation would be for Skate Ontario and/or Skate Canada to update their coach training to include working

with PWA to ease stress and anxiety of future coaches coming into the profession. This would also be in keeping with the training and development research.

3. Build a sense of community. Building a sense of community is important for all individuals involved in the organization. Hosting social events for the organization outside of competitions would allow PWA to interact with their TDP in a different setting. This would also provide parents, coaches, and members of the BOD with an opportunity to interact in a less professional setting where the potential to open up more communication and build stronger relationships are fostered.
4. Space and time. Space refers to an individual's felt sense of space. This is especially important when working with PWA because they will all be different, and the need for accommodation is not always easily visible. It is likely that it will take some discussion, and observation to determine what is best for each individual child, however coaches and volunteers can be trained to recognize the needs of each individual so they are better equipped to handle each unique situation. Also, finding additional practice time specific for PWA would allow for specialized and personalized coaching. Integration with TDP is still important, however, extra practice time for PWA could be helpful in mastering the sport skills.
5. Child-focused. It is important to remember that community sport is for everyone. It is recreational and provides an important opportunity to get involved in the community. Giving the children an opportunity to describe/report on their experiences (e.g., in my study, their felt sense of space) would create a different

way of thinking and a different way of implementing the programming that can prove beneficial for all involved.

### **Future Research**

It is first important to note that when conducting research at a familiar site or with familiar material, the researcher keeps introspective field notes as an on-going internal self-check to avoid personal opinions or biases interfering with the research process.

One area of future research would be to consider the health benefits and concerns of PWA at the community sport level by examining pre- and post-season health status (e.g., overall fitness parameters, motor learning improvements) and making a comparison to determine the benefits and/or concerns. Community level (non-competitive) PWA typically have compromised health profiles in spite of ongoing research devoted to higher performance level PWA (e.g., more formally competitive adaptive sport). Primarily, we could speculate that the ease of data collection with high performance PWA would allow for more convenient research. PWA can and do indeed derive health benefits from community level activity and more particular attention to specific PWA profiles would allow us to add to this body of knowledge.

A second area of future research that would prove very interesting is in the further exploration of the “felt sense of space” of PWA. This was an aspect that came up in this study and could be investigated further. For example, videotaped sessions could be used in a consultative fashion with a participant and a researcher co-observing and describing the performance. The participant adds to the outside view of the performance with his/her insider’s perspective of being in the experience itself. This narration could be audio recorded, could involve key words or emoticons, or other tools of expression such as concept mapping or image ranking or collage.

Another area for future research would be conduct a more in-depth case study of different sport organizations who consciously make an effort to be inclusive and evaluate their practices. Researching an organization with this specific mindset can potentially provide interesting results as KCSC was not consciously making this effort, rather it was instinctual (second nature) and they had no explicit guidelines they were following.

The geographic location of KCSC as well as the socio-economic status of many of the members may affect the results. Therefore, future research looking at a geographic area with a more diversified socio-economic profile and perhaps even a different sport might provide different/ new insights into inclusion at the community sport level.

### **Gaps/Limitations**

It is important to note that this study was not conducted without limitations or gaps. Although the focus of my research was the PWA and gaining that insider perspective, interviewing the TDP at the club could have provided useful information for effective implementation of programming. Additionally, being able to interview more parents, coaches and PWA would have provided further data to analyze and develop guidelines. Unfortunately, the response rate for the study was lower than expected, and therefore this presents as a limitation on the ability to transfer the results of this study to other contexts. Furthermore, a comparison of multiple skating clubs also would have provided additional information that could be useful when creating guidelines and uncovering what other clubs are doing for PWA. To that note, investigating different sport organizations allows for more transferable results. Finally, using a club/organization with a different gender, race, or even socioeconomic status as a comparator can provide additional insights based on the different demographics of the coaches, board members, and parents.

## **Conclusion**

Overall, the results of this study informed the development of five guidelines for sport organizations to consider when integrating PWA into their programming. This study examined the topic mainly from the perspective of the organization, however it is critical to gain the insights of more parents and sport participants to uncover what it is that they expect from a sport organization and to reveal recurring issues.

The research uncovered communication, education, building a sense of community, space and time, and being child-focused to be the five most important aspects to study participants. It is important to remember that communication among all groups is critical to an effective and enjoyable sport experience. Club leaders, parents, coaches, and even PWA have to be vocal about issues and/or concerns that they may have to avoid animosity amongst the different groups. This research also revealed that all individuals involved in the sport experience (e.g., coaches, members of the BOD, parents, the athletes, and provincial/national sport organizations) need to work together to educate one another on best practices to successful integration.

This research can be expanded to multiple case studies and can also be conducted within different sport settings. Exploring different sport organizations offers the potential for a more well-rounded and detailed study. It is important to have effective integration and inclusion of PWA in sport. If the sport experience is not appropriate, meaningful, and effective, few will benefit from the experience and it will only further hinder those individuals' abilities to develop sport skills in an enjoyable environment.

As with any research, there are always limitations that exist. One major flaw was the lower than expected participation rate by members. Having more individuals participate would have allowed for more robust analysis of larger data sets. Another flaw of the study was a minor language barrier between the researcher and a couple of the

participants. Both participants' native language was not English, this was their second language. This language barrier proved to be difficult when conducting interviews and may have hindered the analysis of the data. Furthermore, this research did not examine the TDP within the sport organization, or their parents which also limits the scope of the study.

Next steps that can be taken with this research are to include the Provincial or National Sport Organization and investigate the resources they provide to the community sport organizations to allow for full and effective integration. Additionally, analyzing the coach certification process for different sports (i.e., Coaching Association of Canada) would allow for a deeper understanding of the education the coaches receive, especially since this research, along with previous research found that lack of education was a barrier to integration.

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**Appendix A: REB Approval**

**Brock University**  
 Research Ethics Office  
 Tel: 905-688-5550 ext. 3035  
 Email: reb@brocku.ca

**Social Science Research Ethics Board****Certificate of Ethics Clearance for Human Participant Research**

DATE: 5/20/2015

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: CONNOLLY, Maureen - Kinesiology

FILE: 14-227 - CONNOLLY

TYPE: Masters Thesis/Project STUDENT: Michaela Morello  
 SUPERVISOR: Maureen Connolly

TITLE: How to make it work: An in-depth case study of inclusion in a community figure skating club

**ETHICS CLEARANCE GRANTED**

Type of Clearance: NEW

Expiry Date: 5/31/2016

The Brock University Social Science Research Ethics Board has reviewed the above named research proposal and considers the procedures, as described by the applicant, to conform to the University's ethical standards and the Tri-Council Policy Statement. Clearance granted from 5/20/2015 to 5/31/2016.

The Tri-Council Policy Statement requires that ongoing research be monitored by, at a minimum, an annual report. Should your project extend beyond the expiry date, you are required to submit a Renewal form before 5/31/2016. Continued clearance is contingent on timely submission of reports.

To comply with the Tri-Council Policy Statement, you must also submit a final report upon completion of your project. All report forms can be found on the Research Ethics web page at <http://www.brocku.ca/research/policies-and-forms/research-forms>.

In addition, throughout your research, you must report promptly to the REB:

- a) Changes increasing the risk to the participant(s) and/or affecting significantly the conduct of the study;
- b) All adverse and/or unanticipated experiences or events that may have real or potential unfavourable implications for participants;
- c) New information that may adversely affect the safety of the participants or the conduct of the study;
- d) Any changes in your source of funding or new funding to a previously unfunded project.

We wish you success with your research.

Approved:

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Jan Frijters, Chair

Social Science Research Ethics Board

**Note:** Brock University is accountable for the research carried out in its own jurisdiction or under its auspices and may refuse certain research even though the REB has found it ethically acceptable.

If research participants are in the care of a health facility, at a school, or other institution or community organization, it is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator to ensure that the ethical guidelines and clearance of those facilities or institutions are obtained and filed with the REB prior to the initiation of research at that site.

**Appendix B: Letter of Invitation/ Consent forms/ Interview guides****Letter of Invitation**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Study: How to Make it Work: A Case Study into inclusion in a local figure skating club

Student Principal Investigator:

Michaela Morello (BSM)

Department of Sport Management

Brock University

(416) 455-0405 [morellomichaela@gmail.com](mailto:morellomichaela@gmail.com)

Faculty Supervisor & Principal Investigator:

Dr. Maureen Connolly

Department of Kinesiology

Brock University

(905) 688-5550 Ext. 3381 [mconnolly@brocku.ca](mailto:mconnolly@brocku.ca)

I, Michaela Morello Principal Student Investigator, from the Department of Sport Management, Brock University, invite you to participate in a research project entitled *How to Make it Work: A Case Study into inclusion in a local figure skating club*

The purpose of this research project is to uncover why King City Figure Skating Club (KCFSC) has successfully been able to integrate children with disabilities into the club. Should you choose to participate, you will be asked to participate in an interview (parents, children, and coaches) or a focus group (Board of Directors), lasting approximately 60 minutes in length. Both the interviews and focus group will be audio recorded. Parental and child involvement in the study is not contingent on the other's involvement.

To ensure confidentiality parents, children, and coaches will have the opportunity to select or be given a pseudonym to be used in the final reporting of results. Board members have the option of waiving their confidentiality. The club, KCFSC, will be identified in the report.

This research should benefit the community sport sector by developing a framework that other sport organizations will be able to use to be inclusive, much like KCFSC.

If you have any pertinent questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Brock University Research Ethics Officer (905 688-5550 ext 3035, [reb@brocku.ca](mailto:reb@brocku.ca))

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me (see below for contact information).

Thank you,

Dr. Maureen Connolly



Department of Kinesiology  
Brock University  
(905) 688-5550 Ext. 3381    mconnolly@brocku.ca

Michaela Morello (BSM)  
Department of Sport Management  
Brock University  
(416) 455-0405    morellomichaela@gmail.com

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through Brock University's  
Research Ethics Board 14-227- CONNOLLY

## **Consent Form** (Parents)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Project Title: How to Make it Work: A Case Study into inclusion in a local figure skating club

Student Principal Investigator (SPI): Michaela Morello (BSM)  
Department of Sport Management  
Brock University  
(416) 455-0405 morellomichaela@gmail.com

Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Maureen Connolly  
Department of Kinesiology  
Brock University  
(905) 688-5550 Ext. 3381

### **INVITATION**

You and your child are invited to participate in a study that involves research. The purpose of this study is to uncover why King City Figure Skating Club (KCFSC) has successfully been able to integrate children with disabilities into the club. The hope is that the end product will be the development of a framework that other community sport organizations will be able to use to also successfully integrate children with disabilities into their sport clubs.

### **WHAT'S INVOLVED**

As a participant, you will be asked to participate in an interview of approximately sixty (60) minutes. Interviews will be audio recorded. Furthermore, you will be sent a copy of your interview transcript at which point you will be able to provide any questions/comments to myself regarding your sections only to ensure accuracy. You will be asked to return your transcript via email 7-10 days after receiving it; if no response is sent back to the investigator it will be assumed that there are no change/concerns. Review of transcripts should take no more than a half hour (30 mins.). Note that your child is also being invited to participate in an interview. Please refer to the consent form (children) for further information. Parents and children will be interviewed separately, unless the child specifically asks to have a parent or guardian present.

### **POTENTIAL BENEFITS AND RISKS**

As a member of KCFSC, you will learn more about the club itself and any potential issues that may come to the forefront during the research, however you will also learn more about the positive aspect and contributions of the club. Although you may be familiar with the researcher, you should not feel obligated to participate as participation is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. Should you choose to drop out any information obtained will be destroyed instantly and removed from the study.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

All information you provide is considered confidential; your name will not be included. You will have the option of selecting your own pseudonym or having one assigned to you. The club name, KCFSC, will be used in the final report as well as your child's disability/special accommodation, however no other personal information or characteristics will be used.

No personal information will be shared. Given the location of interviews (King City Arena) others may become aware of your participation, however your responses will still be unknown. Furthermore, it may be possible for others within and outside KCFSC to determine who you or your child is based on the location of the interviews/participation and disability/special accommodation of the child. As the researcher, I will need access to your registration history and details of your child's disability/accommodation (permission is requested at the bottom of this

form) I will also ask the President of KCFSC for additional details such as fees and any special accommodations if it is not evident on the registration form.

Data collected during this study will be stored on a password-protected external hard drive only accessible to those named on this document. There will also be a locked filing cabinet for hard copies of data, and the audio recordings to be stored. Data will be kept until thesis is successfully defended, approximately 2 weeks later, after which time all data will be permanently deleted from the hard-drive, hard copies will be shredded, and audio recordings will be erased.

Access to this data will be restricted to Michaela Morello & Maureen Connolly.

### **VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION**

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you wish, you may decline to answer any questions or participate in any component of the study. Further, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time. Any data will be destroyed at this point.

### **PUBLICATION OF RESULTS**

Results of this study may be published in professional journals and presented at conferences. Feedback about this study will be available by Michaela Morello or Maureen Connolly approximately six months after the study is complete. You can contact either using the information provided above. It is anticipated this will be available by June 2016. Results will also be available via the KCFSC website, this will be a summary accompanied by the framework that was developed.

### **CONTACT INFORMATION AND ETHICS CLEARANCE**

If you have any questions about this study or require further information, please contact Michaela Morello or Maureen Connolly using the contact information provided above. This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the Research Ethics Board at Brock University. If you have any comments or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Research Ethics Office at (905) 688-5550 Ext. 3035, [reb@brocku.ca](mailto:reb@brocku.ca).  
REB #

Thank you for your assistance in this project. Please keep a copy of this form for your records.

### **CONSENT FORM**

I agree to participate in this study described above. I have made this decision based on the information I have read in the Information-Consent Letter. I have had the opportunity to receive any additional details I wanted about the study and understand that I may ask questions in the future. I understand that I may withdraw this consent at any time.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Pseudonym: \_\_\_\_\_ or check box to have one assigned ☐  
Permission to access and use personal information (children registered and any accommodations) for research purposes. This includes access to your child's skating club information with KCFSC to determine special accommodations and fees to discover any additional charges or accommodations.

Please Check below.

Yes ☐

No ☐

## **Consent Form** (Children)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Project Title: How to Make it Work: A Case Study into inclusion in a local figure skating club

Student Principal Investigator (SPI): Michaela Morello (BSM)  
Department of Sport Management  
Brock University  
(416) 455-0405 morellomichaela@gmail.com

Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Maureen Connolly  
Department of Kinesiology  
Brock University  
(905) 688-5550 Ext. 3381

### **INVITATION**

Your child is invited to participate in a study that involves research. The purpose of this study is to uncover why King City Figure Skating Club (KCFSC) has successfully been able to integrate children with disabilities into the club. The hope is that the end product will be the development of a framework that other community sport organizations will be able to use to also successfully integrate children with disabilities into their sport clubs.

### **WHAT'S INVOLVED**

As a participant, your child will be asked to participate in an interview of approximately sixty (60) minutes. Interviews will consist of questions about your child's figure skating experience(s) and will also include having the children draw to express emotions. Interviews will be audio recorded.

### **POTENTIAL BENEFITS AND RISKS**

As a member of KCFSC, although your child may be familiar with the researcher, your child should not feel obligated to participate as participation is voluntary and your child may withdraw at any time. Should your child choose to drop out any information obtained will be destroyed instantly and removed from the study. Should you or your child choose to drop out any information obtained will be destroyed instantly and removed from the study.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

All information your child provides is considered confidential; their name will not be included. Your child will have the option of selecting their own pseudonym or having one assigned to them. The club name, KCFSC, will be used in the final report, and your child's disability/ special accommodation

No personal information will be shared. Given the location of interviews (King City Arena) others may become aware of your child's participation, however their responses will still be unknown. Furthermore, it may be possible for others within and outside KCFSC to determine who you or your child is based on the location of the interviews/participation and disability/special accommodation of the child. As the researcher, I will need access to your registration history and details of your child's disability/accommodation (permission is requested at the bottom of this form) I will also ask the President of KCFSC for additional details such as fees and any special accommodations if it is not evident on the registration form.

Data collected during this study will be stored on a password-protected external hard drive only accessible to those named on this document. There will also be a locked filing cabinet for hard copies of data, and the audio recordings to be stored. Data will be kept until thesis is successfully defended, approximately 2 weeks later, after which time all data will be permanently deleted from the hard-drive, hard copies will be shredded, and audio recordings will be erased.

Access to this data will be restricted to Michaela Morello & Maureen Connolly.

### **VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION**

Participation in this study is voluntary. If your child wishes, your child may decline to answer any questions or participate in any component of the study. Further, you or your child may decide to withdraw from this study at any time and may do so without any penalty. Any data will be destroyed at this point. I will be gaining verbal assent from each child in addition to consent provided by you (the parents/guardian).

### **PUBLICATION OF RESULTS**

Results of this study may be published in professional journals and presented at conferences. Feedback about this study will be available by Michaela Morello or Maureen Connolly approximately six months after the study is complete. Your child can contact either using the information provided above. It is anticipated this will be available by June 2016. Results will also be available via the KCFSC website, this will be a summary accompanied by the framework that was developed.

### **CONTACT INFORMATION AND ETHICS CLEARANCE**

If your child have any questions about this study or require further information, please contact Michaela Morello or Maureen Connolly using the contact information provided above. This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the Research Ethics Board at Brock University. If your child have any comments or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Research Ethics Office at (905) 688-5550 Ext. 3035, [reb@brocku.ca](mailto:reb@brocku.ca).

REB #

Thank your child for your assistance in this project. Please keep a copy of this form for your records.

### **CONSENT FORM**

I agree to allow my child to participate in this study described above. I have made this decision on their behalf based on the information read in the Information-Consent Letter. I have had the opportunity to receive any additional details I wanted about the study and understand that I or my child may ask questions in the future. I understand that my child may withdraw this consent at any time.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature if under 18 years old: \_\_\_\_\_

Pseudonym: \_\_\_\_\_ or check box to have one assigned ☐

Permission to access and use personal information (children registered and any accommodations) for research purpose. This includes access to your child's skating club information with KCFSC to determine special accommodations and fees to discover any additional charges or accommodations

Please Check below.

Yes

☐

No

☐

## **Consent Form** (Coaches)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Project Title: How to Make it Work: A Case Study into inclusion in a local figure skating club

Student Principal Investigator (SPI): Michaela Morello (BSM)  
Department of Sport Management  
Brock University  
(416) 455-0405 morellomichaela@gmail.com

Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Maureen Connolly  
Department of Kinesiology  
Brock University  
(905) 688-5550 Ext. 3381

### **INVITATION**

You are invited to participate in a study that involves research. The purpose of this study is to uncover why King City Figure Skating Club (KCFSC) has successfully been able to integrate children with disabilities into the club. The hope is that the end product will be the development of a framework that other community sport organizations will be able to use to also successfully integrate children with disabilities into their sport clubs.

### **WHAT'S INVOLVED**

As a participant, you will be asked to participate in an interview of approximately sixty (60) minutes. Interviews will be audio recorded. Furthermore, you will be sent a copy of your interview transcript at which point you will be able to provide any questions/comments to myself regarding your sections only to ensure accuracy. You will be asked to return your transcript via email 7-10 days after receiving it; if no response is sent back to the investigator it will be assumed that there are no change/concerns. Review of transcripts should take no more than a half hour (30 mins.).

### **POTENTIAL BENEFITS AND RISKS**

As a coach of KCFSC, you will receive feedback about the club's role in integrating children with disabilities. Although you may be familiar with the researcher, you should not feel obligated to participate as participation is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. Should you choose to drop out any information obtained will be destroyed instantly and removed from the study. Should you choose to drop out any information obtained will be destroyed instantly and removed from the study.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

All information you provide is considered confidential; your name will not be included. You will have the option of selecting your own pseudonym or having one assigned to you. The club name, KCFSC, will be used in the final report, as well as your position within the club (Coach). Given the location of interviews (King City Arena) others may become aware of your participation, however your responses will still be unknown.

No personal information will be shared.

Data collected during this study will be stored on a password-protected external hard drive only accessible to those named on this document. There will also be a locked filing cabinet for hard copies of data, and the audio recordings to be stored. Data will be kept until thesis is successfully defended, approximately 2 weeks later, after which time all data will be permanently deleted from the hard-drive, hard copies will be shredded, and audio recordings will be erased.

Access to this data will be restricted to Michaela Morello & Maureen Connolly.

**VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION**

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you wish, you may decline to answer any questions or participate in any component of the study. Further, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time. Any data will be destroyed at this point.

**PUBLICATION OF RESULTS**

Results of this study may be published in professional journals and presented at conferences. Feedback about this study will be available by Michaela Morello or Maureen Connolly approximately six months after the study is complete. You can contact either using the information provided above. It is anticipated this will be available by June 2016. Results will also be available via the KCFSC website, this will be a summary accompanied by the framework that was developed.

**CONTACT INFORMATION AND ETHICS CLEARANCE**

If you have any questions about this study or require further information, please contact Michaela Morello or Maureen Connolly using the contact information provided above. This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the Research Ethics Board at Brock University. If you have any comments or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Research Ethics Office at (905) 688-5550 Ext. 3035, [reb@brocku.ca](mailto:reb@brocku.ca).

REB #

Thank you for your assistance in this project. Please keep a copy of this form for your records.

**CONSENT FORM**

I agree to participate in this study described above. I have made this decision based on the information I have read in the Information-Consent Letter. I have had the opportunity to receive any additional details I wanted about the study and understand that I may ask questions in the future. I understand that I may withdraw this consent at any time.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Pseudonym: \_\_\_\_\_ or check box to have one assigned

☐

**Consent Form**  
(Board of Directors)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Project Title: How to Make it Work: A Case Study into inclusion in a local figure skating club

Student Principal Investigator (SPI): Michaela Morello (BSM)  
Department of Sport Management  
Brock University  
(416) 455-0405 morellomichaela@gmail.com

Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Maureen Connolly  
Department of Kinesiology  
Brock University  
(905) 688-5550 Ext. 3381

**INVITATION**

You are invited to participate in a study that involves research. The purpose of this study is to uncover why King City Figure Skating Club (KCFSC) has successfully been able to integrate children with disabilities into the club. The hope is that the end product will be the development of a framework that other community sport organizations will be able to use to also successfully integrate children with disabilities into their sport clubs.

**WHAT'S INVOLVED**

As a participant, you will be asked to participate in a focus group of approximately sixty (60) minutes. The focus group will be audio recorded. Furthermore, you will be sent a copy of the transcript at which point you will be able to provide any questions/comments to myself regarding your sections only to ensure accuracy. You will be asked to return your transcript via email 7-10 days after receiving it; if no response is sent back to the investigator it will be assumed that there are no change/concerns. Review of transcripts should take no more than a half hour (30 mins.). The focus group will consist of approximately 7-8 people and the researcher.

**POTENTIAL BENEFITS AND RISKS**

As a member of the Board of Directors of KCFSC, you will receive feedback about the club's role in integrating children with disabilities. Additionally, you will have access to the framework that is going to be developed and may be used for future reference. Although you may be familiar with the researcher, you should not feel obligated to participate as participation is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. Should you choose to drop out any information obtained will be destroyed instantly and removed from the study.

**CONFIDENTIALITY**

All information you provide is considered confidential; unless you choose to have your name included in the final report. If you do not wish to be identified, a pseudonym will be used. You will have the option of selecting your own pseudonym or having one assigned to you. The club name, KCFSC, will be used in the final report.

No personal information will be shared. There are limits to the confidentiality that I am able to offer given the format of a focus group (ie: possible disclosure made by participants) therefore it is highly encouraged to respect fellow participants and keep all information discussed during the focus group confidential.

Data collected during this study will be stored on a password-protected external hard drive only accessible to those named on this document. There will also be a locked filing cabinet for hard copies of data, and the audio recordings to be stored. Data will be kept until thesis is successfully



defended, approximately 2 weeks later, after which time all data will be permanently deleted from the hard-drive, hard copies will be shredded, and audio recordings will be erased.

Access to this data will be restricted to Michaela Morello & Maureen Connolly.

### **VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION**

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you wish, you may decline to answer any questions or participate in any component of the study. Further, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time. Any data will be destroyed at this point.

### **PUBLICATION OF RESULTS**

Results of this study may be published in professional journals and presented at conferences. Feedback about this study will be available by Michaela Morello or Maureen Connolly approximately six months after the study is complete. You can contact either using the information provided above. It is anticipated this will be available by June 2016. Results will also be available via the KCFSC website, this will be a summary accompanied by the framework that was developed.

### **CONTACT INFORMATION AND ETHICS CLEARANCE**

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REB #

Thank you for your assistance in this project. Please keep a copy of this form for your records.

### **CONSENT FORM**

I agree to participate in this study described above. I have made this decision based on the information I have read in the Information-Consent Letter. I have had the opportunity to receive any additional details I wanted about the study and understand that I may ask questions in the future. I understand that I may withdraw this consent at any time.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I wish to waive my right to confidentiality and allow my permission for the researcher to use my name. Please check.

Yes ☐ No ☐ If yes: Full name ☐ First name only ☐ Last name only ☐

If you do not wish to be identified please fill out accordingly:

Pseudonym: \_\_\_\_\_ or check box to have one assigned ☐

### Interview Guide (Coaches)

First off I would like to say thank-you for taking the time to speak to me today. I have provided you with a brief background of the research earlier; did you have any questions regarding the specific research before we dive into the interview? This interview should last no longer than sixty minutes and it will be audio recorded so that I will be able to transcribe and refer back to answers later in my research. If at any time you would prefer not to answer a question or are feeling uncomfortable please just let me know and we will make accommodations. I would love for this to be an open dialogue, so if you feel like you would like to add additional information or have another question please do not hesitate to jump in. If you are all ready to go, I would be happy to start.

First, I just want to gather a little information about you:

1. Full name
2. Age
3. How many years have you been coaching?
4. What level certification do you currently have?
5. Have you coached anywhere else?
6. Were you a member of KCFSC before you became a coach?
7. What levels/age groups do you coach?

Now I would like to move into more details about your coaching experience.

1. Tell me about your experience here at KCFSC as a coach compared to any other clubs you have worked with (if any).

I also have a few questions regarding the club as a whole

1. Can you describe the atmosphere of the club?
2. How involved are the coaches in decisions?
3. What (if any) tools are provided to you as a coach in order to work with CWD?
  - a. Would you like more
  - b. What type?
  - c. How were they helpful?
4. To your knowledge, What is the overall structure of the organization?
5. How were you prepared to work with CWD? What strategies have you developed over time and across contexts?
6. What specific challenges have you encountered over time in your coaching, both with CWD and other children with whom you work?
7. Describe some of your joys and frustration
8. In your opinion what makes a club/coach inclusive/accessible?

Those are all my questions; do you have anything you would like to ask/ say that might be useful for the study?

Again thank-you very much for your time today, it is greatly appreciated

**Interview Guide (Children)**

Hi there, my name is Michaela and I just want to ask you a few questions about skating today, is that okay?

So first of all what is your name? how old are you?

1. Who is your coach at skating?
2. How long have you been skating?
3. Do you like figure skating?
4. Can you draw me a picture of how you feel when you are at skating?
5. Do you play any other sports? (dance, hockey, soccer)
6. What is your favourite part about being at skating?
7. Do you feel like you are left out when you are at skating?
  - a. If yes, why?
  - b. If no, who / how do you feel included?

Do you have any questions for me? Or would you like to say anything else about your figure skating experiences?

Well, thank you so much for talking to me today... it was lovely getting to know you and I hope you have a great rest of your figure skating season!

For non-verbal... these are possible approaches I will take depending on the situation:

1. ranking images of generic coach athlete interactions
2. using touch screen icons and emoticons in response to questions
3. using manipulables ( 3D materials that can be moved into places to represent preference
4. constructing a collage of preferred images

Additional Prompts to be used if child is verbal or not:

1. tell me a story about a good experience you had with a coach; what made it good?  
*[repeat with a bad experience]*
2. what words best describe you? What would you like from a coach?
3. who are your friends and what kinds of things do you do?
4. how happy are you with the help you get/ what else can the coach do?
5. are there things that you wish the coach knew about (ie: you, skating, other kids etc.)?
6. what are the things that you enjoy most? least?
7. how involved is your mom/dad in your program?

### Interview Guide (Parents)

First off I would like to say thank-you for taking the time to speak to me today. I have provided you with a brief background of the research earlier; did you have any questions regarding the specific research before we dive into the interview? This interview should last no longer than sixty minutes and it will be audio recorded so that I will be able to transcribe and refer back to answers later in my research. If at any time you would not like to answer a question or are feeling uncomfortable please just let me know and we will make accommodations. I would love for this to be a fairly open dialogue, so if you feel like you would like to add additional information or have another question please do not hesitate to jump in. If you are all ready to go, I would be happy to start.

Name? Occupation? Number of children?

First can you please just tell me about your child(ren)... age, likes, dislikes, school.. anything

1. Can you please describe your day for me when your child has skating that evening.
2. How many years of involvement in sport?
  - a. Skating?
3. Can you please describe your experience(s) with any other sport/ recreation organizations?
4. What has been some of your biggest challenges getting your child into sport?
5. When you walk into the arena for KCFSC, can you describe what you are feeling, smelling, seeing etc.?
6. What has your experience with KCFSC club been like so far?
  - a. How does it differ from others?
  - b. Do you feel the support?
  - c. Was there ever any issues?
  - d. How does your child feel about KCFSC?
  - e. Have they spoken to you about their experiences? – what have they been like?
7. What do you feel really separates KCFSC from the rest? (if anything)
8. As a parent, what has been the biggest challenge when dealing with sport/community organizations?

Do you have any questions or additional comments you would like to add before we wrap up?

Thank you so much for taking your time to speak with me today.

### **Focus Group Guide (Board Members)**

Introduce myself and discuss confidentiality and opportunity for individual follow up later.

Ask if they can say their name before they speak each time just to allow for easier transcription.

Open forum; don't have to go in order; don't cut others off; if you don't want to speak you don't have to.

Please go around the room and state your name and position with KCFSC.

1. What is the background history of KCFSC?
  - a. How long has this current board been in place?
2. How are decisions made within the club?
3. What does KCFSC value the most in your opinions?
4. What is your knowledge about the AODA/ inclusion?
5. Can you describe the environment on an evening that has CanSkate?
6. Please explain how connected KCFSC is with Skate Ontario and how it uses their resources (if it does).
  - a. Do you feel support from the Skate Ontario?
7. How are accommodations made to integrate CWD?

Any other questions/comments?

Thanks and wrap up.

## Appendix C: Interview Analysis

Susan

~~Interview~~ - January 2016

me: so first can i get your name and how old you are.

C: umm ~~[redacted]~~ and I'm 23 years old

me: ok, and how long have you been skating?

C: 10 years.

me: 10 years, and have you always been at King City

C: yes. well King City took over Bond Lake and I started that way

me: okay so you started with Bond Lake but then technically it was always the same club i guess right?

C: yeah yeah

Me: and who is your Coach?

C: ~~[redacted]~~

me: and she is your main coach. do you have any others?

C: umm usually its her but i skate with like ~~[redacted]~~, and ~~[redacted]~~, and ~~[redacted]~~

me: and they all teach you different things?

C: yeah, ~~[redacted]~~ teaches me the Dutch Waltz and everything

me: so are you on dances?

C: im trying! I got one side of the rink complete its just....its the other side

me: yeah, its difficult cause its the opposite of what you just learned right

C: yeah yeah

me: do you play any other sports?

C: no

Me: have you ever?

C: no

me: no, so why figure skating?

Body  
space  
Time  
Relation

C: i dont know...i .... just wanted to all of a sudden do it again. like i was in it as little kid and i screamed and i didn't like it then all of a sudden when i was 12... 13 i said mom i wanna try again. i hugged the boards but eventually got it to work

me: thats good... so what is your favourite part about being at skating?

C: i dont know... just like the feeling of the ice. annnnddd just being with everybody that i've known like since they started. like the same the same coaches that i started with and then the kids i [chuckle] i see year in and year out and its nice to see oh your back, oh you came back its nice that way cause their all familiar with me and i'm familiar with them and it just nice to be with people other than your family. *Relationship*

Me: of course its like a little break. so do you have any friends from school that come skating?

C: no

me: ok so they are all friends you made at skating?

C: yeah

me: cool. ok so do you feel like you are really included when you are there?

C: sometimeessss i feel like i am left out. but i think sometimes its because of what i can do and what i can't do

me: ok sooo... like when do you feel left out?

C: like, if i'm in a group with Rayleen, and Brenda wants Gayleen to work on the umm a certain kind of...a waltz jump.. i don't know how to do that so i have to work on something else. but like i shouldn't know how to do that

me: so you are in a group with other people and they all know how to do the waltz jump already?

C: yeah, and they are just practicing

me: ok i see... and have you ever asked for help when that happens?

C: sometimes. if i'm working on a skill that i need to, she'll come over and see how i'm doing with a different skill but she'll never come over and say, oh lets try the waltz jump

me: ok... ok... uummmm so can you tell me any stories about a good experience, something positive that happened?

C: i dont ummmm noooo not really but when i do a complete side of the Dutch Waltz it's like i'm so happy like ohh i did it! i did it! but i only did half of it *piece of accomplishment*

me: thats still something! have you ever had a bad experience? can you tell me about that if you don't mind?

C: yeah...uhh no i don't mind. i think it was last year or the year before i was just skating and i don't know if you know her but Mo she does umm *and her kids whiz by you and i guess they* *space*

didn't see me or i didn't see them or i just didn't stop in time i don't know i cant remember, but i just remember but her kid smashed and i fell on top of her kid and the kid got out but then her blade must have went up my track pants and stabbed me

me: oh no. so you were bleeding I'm guessing?

C: yeah i had to get off

me: oh wow and did you have to get stitches or anything?

C: stitches? no, no stitches!

me: so did Mo get mad at you or blame you for it?

C: no she didn't get mad at me. to this day she didn't even apologize

me: ok and did the other girl apologize?

C: no, she didn't apologize.. uhh even though Mo's group skates on Tuesdays as i do we just avoid each other

me: ok. so what words would you say best describe you?

C: smart, beautiful, pretty, loves pink... umm.. i don know just....kind... fun...i don't know just ...

me: no, thats good. so what would like from a coach? like what kind of personality would they have, how would they act toward you... just what would you like to see from the coaches?

C: mmooooorreee i don't know just...i don't know more interactive i guess... have not so much pushing me more, but just.... wanting me to work on different stuff but in a way that they know i could do it.

me: ok, so you don't feel that they are breaking it down enough for you?

C: yeah more easier

me: so how you described yourself, but how would you describe your coach...or how you want your coach to be?

C: a bit nicer, a bit friendlier, a bit more friendlier a bit more nicer but other than that..

me: so other than that it's been pretty good with the coaches in the last...

C: yeah, especially chris [chuckles]

me: oh yeah? i used to skate with Chris too hmmm soo at skating you said you have lots of friends

C: yeah just little kid friends though

me: yeah? but do you guys ever do anything special on the ice or off ice even?



C: no...sometimes we'll do like fun stuff for like christmas or something...like fun stuff on the ice but thats it

me: so would you say you are pretty happy with the help you get from your coaches and volunteers?

C: sometimes i'm happy with it....soemtimes i'm not

me: can you explain what makes you happy or not...

\* C: their just not <sup>relation?</sup> very interactive with me as i wish they would have been more.

me: have you ever talked to them about that before, or talked to Brenda about that?

C: sometimes I try but .... it's ok... I'm used to it now....sometimes i just wish it would go a bit further a bit better.

me: umm umm so what would you say you enjoy the most when you are at skating

C: umm... i dont know... i guess just being on the ice... trying not to fall.

me: it can be anything

C: yeah being at the arena, talking to other people and just skating

me: and what do you like least of all

C: umm i dont know.... [thinking for a while] noting really

me: ok thats fine

C: oh yeah, sometimes the skaters... i feel like... umm i feel a bit uneasy when there are skaters going around, whipping around and some i know that will watch out and some i know that just don't care.

me: so the session you skate on usually has a lot of advanced skaters?

C: yeah, yeah likes mo's group and even some of Brenda's kids too... and even though i know they knowww.. they don't know my whole issues but they just watch out for me. but mo's group they don't ... like sometimes i would like it if they weren't skating at all but i just

me: so do you ever wish you were on the ice without the advanced group? most specialized?

C: yeah..yeah totally

me: and are you parents really involved in skating?

C: yeah yeah..they come to competition and stuff

me: anything else to ask or say?

C: no i guess just if anything comes out of this that i can get a little more, smaller group on the ice

space

- "Wants space?"
- seems to have abit of a sense of entitlement, especially when it comes to space
- "interactive" = important from coaches.
- sense of accomplishment is important to her.

**Appendix D: Communication Form**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/ Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Important Notes:

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Communication with Coach Request:

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